

The Term *b^erith* (Covenant) in the Historical and Wisdom Books of the Old Testament

by

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DEDICATED TO MY HUSBAND, GREG, WHOSE
LOVE AND ENCOURAGEMENT SUSTAINED ME
DURING THIS PROJECT

Abstract

This work is concerned with the word *b'rit* (covenant) in the historical and wisdom books of the Old Testament, and continues research done in previous articles on *b'rit* in the Pentateuch and the prophetic literature. The main aim is to discuss in some detail the texts containing the word *b'rit* in the historical and wisdom books of the Old Testament and to examine the meaning and use of the word in these writings. The interrelationships between *b'rit* and other words in the contexts in which they appear are explored and explained. Finally, *b'rit* in the historical and wisdom books usually refers to one of the covenants of the Pentateuch, and which of these is applicable in each case will also be discussed.

Key-words/phrases:

Abrahamic covenant; Ark of the Covenant; berith; breaking the covenant; chesed; covenant in the Chronicler's history; covenant in the Deuteronomic History; covenant in the Old Testament; Covenant in the Wisdom Books; Covenant; keeping the covenant; Sinai covenant

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Abbreviations

AV	Authorised Version
BDB	The New Brown -Driver-Briggs Hebrew-English Lexicon
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
BibSac	Bibliotheca Sacra
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
JBL	Journal for Biblical Literature
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NEB	New English Bible
NIV	New International Version
NKJV	New King James Version
OTE	Old Testament Essays
RSV	Revised Standard Version
TB	Tyndale Bulletin
TZ	Theologische Zeitschrift
VT	Vetus Testamentum
ZAW	Zeitschrift für Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZTK	Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche

1. Introduction

'[W]ords, ... cannot be read in isolation; their colour and content are derived from their context....[N]o one should profess to understand any part of...any...document before he has read the whole of it.' These remarks by Viscount Simonds in an important legal case¹ are equally applicable in Biblical interpretation, and provide the *raison d'être* for the study on the word תַּיִב in the Old Testament that I started for two assignments for UNISA.² This work completes this study in that it extends it to the historical and wisdom books.

The main concern of this dissertation is to discuss in some detail the different scriptures containing the word תַּיִב in the historical and wisdom books and to examine the meaning and use of the word in these writings. The different contexts of the word are considered, and its interrelationships with other words (such as אֲבִי) are explained. Suggestions will be made as to which translation equivalent would be most suitable in the different contexts, and which of the covenants encountered in the Pentateuch is or are being referred to.

I have followed the English division of the Old Testament for this work, rather than the Hebrew canon, which in the case of the historical books (under which I included Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah) was mainly for chronological reasons. Under Wisdom books I have included all the non-historical books that are in the third division of the Hebrew canon, the Writings. This includes the book of Daniel, which according to the English division of the Old Testament canon should actually be part of the Prophets. The reason for this is that I had not discussed the word תַּיִב in this book before, and wished to include it.

Part of the study examines the importance of the Ark of the Covenant. Here the emphasis is not only on the cult object itself, but on the meaning and implications of the phrase 'Ark of the Covenant' on the concept of תַּיִב in the contexts where the Ark occurs. The so-called 'Ark narrative' (1 Samuel 4-6 and 2 Samuel 6) is also discussed in this section.

I have generally followed a synchronic approach, dealing with diachronic issues only where it seemed necessary. This is because I feel the text needs to be studied as a whole as we have it now, since this is the text available. While diachronic studies are valuable, they often disregard the literary unity of the texts. In addition, the longstanding debate and often very different results concerning the textual history of the biblical books inspires little confidence in proposed earlier text forms.

¹ *Attorney-General v Prince Ernest Augustus of Hanover* [1957] AC 436, quoted in Smith & Bailey (1991:326).

² Linington, S 2002a. 'The term תַּיִב in the Old Testament. Part I. An enquiry into the meaning and use of the word in the contexts of the covenants between God and humans in the Pentateuch.' *OTE* 15/3, 2002, 687-714. Also Linington, S 2002b. 'The term תַּיִב in the Old Testament, Part II, An enquiry into the meaning and use of the word in the prophetic literature (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Book of the Twelve)', assignment submitted for MTHOT3-G at UNISA, 2002.

2. The word **tyriB]]** in the Former Prophets: Joshua to 2 Kings

In the Hebrew canon, the four books Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings belong to the section of the Prophets. The significance of this observation lies in the fact that Joshua-Kings are therefore not primarily to be regarded as a record of the history of the nation, though this is certainly one aspect of these books. Rather, the primary reason for these writings was 'to bear testimony to the working out of the prophetic word in the life of [Israel]' (Childs 1979:236). Apart from explaining to the exiled community the reasons for the disaster that had befallen them, the author also wished to offer the people new hope in the form of a promise of forgiveness if they turned back to Yahweh, as indicated in the recurring pattern of apostasy/failure-repentance-obedience-renewed relationship with Yahweh. This pattern is clearest in Judges, but its traces can be found in all the historical books. The theme behind this pattern is the covenant between Israel and Yahweh at Mt Sinai, even where the word **tyriB]** does not explicitly occur. In this chapter I shall concentrate on the scriptures in Joshua-Kings where the word **tyriB]** is explicitly mentioned. However, before looking at the word **tyriB]** alone, it is important to briefly consider the occurrence of the word in the phrase 'Ark of the Covenant'.

2.1. *The Ark of the Covenant*

In the deuteronomistic history, but in particular in Joshua and Samuel, the term **tyriB]** often occurs in the phrase 'Ark of the Covenant' (usually as **tyriB]h ÷/ra }** or **hw:hyōAtyriB] ÷/ra }**). The importance of the ark is obvious even in a cursory reading of these books, and its main features and functions will be briefly highlighted in the following.

2.1.1. *The ark as a cult object*

As a religious object, the ark is first mentioned in Exodus 25:10, where Yahweh instructs Moses to have a wooden chest built, which will contain the testimony (**tdu [e]**) that the Lord would give to Moses. It is interesting to note that the detailed instructions for making the ark precede the instructions for the building of the tabernacle. Indeed, according to Exodus it is the first religious object that Yahweh commands to be made,³ a fact which points to its theological significance. The ark was made of wood and overlaid with gold,⁴ and it was the only object that was placed in the Holy of Holies. Because of its holiness it was not to be touched, but carried with poles, also made of wood and overlaid with gold which were then put through rings fastened to the ark, never to be

³ In the actual description of how the tabernacle and its furnishings were made, the tabernacle is the first thing to be built, probably because it was to house all the other objects.

⁴ This indicates its holiness, since the closer to the Holy of Holies items in the tent and temple were, the costlier were the materials used in their construction.

removed again. Inside the ark were the tablets of the testimony (ṭḏu [e]), and it was covered with a ṭṛ, Pōk', variously translated 'mercy seat', 'propitiatory'⁵ or simply 'cover', made of pure gold, and in one piece with the cherubim on top of it. This was the place where the Lord would meet with Moses and speak to him concerning the commandments that Moses was give to the Israelites (Ex 25:10-22).

The ark, perhaps even more than the tabernacle,⁶ symbolised the presence of Yahweh with his people. Jacob (1958:256-257) notes that it was the real dwelling place of Yahweh, which 'contained the mysterious and, on occasion, explosive holiness of God and...as container of the law recalled how God had bound himself up with the people.' On many occasions it went before the Israelites, for example when they crossed the Jordan into Canaan (Jos 3-4), and often in war (e g Jos 6). Thus it appears that the ark had already early in Israel's history acquired the status of a war palladium, as is evident from the book of Joshua and Judges, where it often goes into battle before the Israelites. During David's time too it accompanied Joab and the army into war against Rabbah (2 Sm 11:11), though no significance is attributed to this in the context of that chapter.

The presence of the Lord in the symbol of the ark was, however, both reassuring and frightening, it could convey both blessing and curse. Because the ark was such a holy object, special rules pertained to its manner of transportation. It was not to be touched, but carried using the poles attached to it, and only priests were allowed to move it. When David wanted to transfer the ark to Jerusalem, he did so in an unprescribed manner, and as a result Yahweh struck Uzzah dead for his irreverence when he tried to stabilise the ark (2 Sm 6:6-8).

2.1.2. The term 'Ark of the Covenant'

Hague (1997:506) points out that the full implications of the imagery involved in the whole set-up of the ark and the ṭṛ, Pōk' implies the 'requisite need for sanctification and purity in the presence of a holy God. The holiness of those who approach Yahweh is critical to sustaining the covenant with Yahweh...' What then is the connection between the ark and the covenant?

The phrase 'Ark of the Covenant (of the Lord)' (ḥw:hyŌAtyrīb] ÷/ra}) is for the first time mentioned in Numbers 10:33 (RSV), where we are told that it 'went before them (i.e. the Israelites) three days' journey, to seek out a resting place for them.' It occurs five more times in the Pentateuch, numerous times in the books of Joshua and Judges, and a few times in the books of Kings and Chronicles. The ark is not mentioned again after its placement in the temple by Solomon, except for Jeremiah 3:16, where Jeremiah notes that no-one will remember it anymore in the new age that the Lord will bring about in the Land. Apart from this, there is only one mention

⁵ So Childs (1974:513 and 524), from the Vulgate '*propitiatorum*.'

⁶ There has been a longstanding debate concerning both the origin of the ark and its connection to the tabernacle (or 'tent'). For the purposes of this work this debate is not essential, but information on this issue may be found for example in De Vaux (1973:297-302) and Föhrer (1973:84-85, 106-111). I shall consider both the ark and the tabernacle as relics from the Mosaic period.

of the ark outside the Pentateuch and the historical books, namely in Psalm 132, which refers to David's intention to build a place for the Lord.

The significance of the term $hw:hy\ddot{O}AtyriB] \div /ra\}$ obviously lies in the fact that the 'covenant' ($tyriB]$) or 'testimony' ($t\ddot{d}u[e]$ ⁷) of the Lord was kept in the ark (Exodus 25:10). This accords well with the obviously fairly widespread custom in the Ancient Near East to keep important documents like treaties, oaths and covenants in a container under the images of deities in a temple (c f Haran 1959:89). Such documents contained legislation and agreements that both parties would be anxious to observe and the deities under whose feet they were deposited, served as witnesses to the relationships established in this way. Similarly, the tablets of the law that were kept in the $t\ddot{d}u[eh; \div roa\}$, a term usually attributed to P by source critics, were a kind of legal document which was binding on both Yahweh and Israel, though perhaps even more upon Israel who had committed themselves to keep the stipulations laid down. In this context the term 'testimony' is particularly suitable, more so than 'covenant', since it emphasises its importance as a witness before the throne of God, as a document that is brought before the highest authority (c f Haran 1959:90).

The ark itself 'represented for Israel the localized presence of God in judgment, mercy, forgiveness and love; and because it contained the Ten Commandments, it was a visible reminder that their life was to be lived in obedience to the expressed will of God' (Knight 1993:56). The tablets inside the ark testified to the continuity between Yahweh's revelation on Mt Sinai and his ongoing revelation to Israel in the tabernacle (Childs 1973:541). They also represented the demands of Yahweh for complete loyalty and obedience to himself and for social justice and love towards fellow Israelites (c f Knight 1993:56). In other words, the demands of the covenant Israel had entered into on Mt Sinai were an ever-present reality for Israel that was represented by the ark which accompanied them.

The mode of the presence of Yahweh with the ark has been a matter of debate. Some scholars consider it as Yahweh's throne, similar to a Greek custom where sometimes empty thrones were worshipped as the thrones of certain gods,⁸ a notion that according to Zimmerli (1978:76) seems to be supported by Jeremiah 3:16-17.⁹ The deity was not visualised, but symbolised indirectly by the

⁷ The word $t\ddot{d}u[e]$ may be related to the Akkadian *adu*, which is frequently used in treaty-covenants (Cole 1973:191, n. 1). Albright (1957, *From Stone Age to Christianity*, not available to me, referred to in Thompson 1959:74) however traces the word $t\ddot{d}u[e]$ back to an earlier form "*adoth*" meaning 'covenant,' a word that also occurs in the form '*adim*'. If this is correct, and it may well be, there would be many more references to the covenant between Yahweh and the people in the Hebrew Bible than is immediately obvious. However, it is beyond the scope of this work to pursue such a study.

⁸ See also von Rad (1975:237), though he does not mention the idea of the Greek gods. He observes (in note 110) that it is nevertheless remarkable that the ark is never called a 'throne' in the Bible, but a 'casket'.

⁹ Zimmerli (1978:76) does however not go into any detail. I think this interpretation of Jeremiah 3:16-17 is rather far-fetched and not really warranted. In verse 16 it is stated that the ark will not be remembered anymore by the people, but that Jerusalem will be called 'the throne of God', but I find it difficult to see a connection between the 'empty throne' that is apparently worshipped according to some Greek custom and these verses.

empty seat (Haran 1959:30). On the other hand, the ark is depicted as Yahweh's footstool (e.g. Pss 99:5, 132:7-8; Is 6) or as a container for the most holy objects, the Ten Commandments. However, the fact that the stone tablets were concealed has seemed odd to many scholars who argue that such stone inscriptions were meant to be publicly displayed. As a result, some have actually assumed that at first the ark may have held a fetish stone or other similar object (Haran 1959:30). But, strange as it is that the tablets should be covered rather than publicly displayed, I think there may be a special significance in it. Could it not be that the very fact that the stipulations of the law are covered actually symbolises God's mercy in his dealings with the people? In a public place, the tablets were always a reminder not only of the covenant per se, but also of the curses inherent in the case of a breach. The טַרְ, פֹּקֵ' is not merely a cover for the ark, but it also symbolises the atonement,¹⁰ and thus the mercy available to the people.¹¹

Nevertheless, considering the variety of contexts in which the ark and the טַרְ, פֹּקֵ' occur in the Bible, it is best not to be dogmatic, but to allow for a variety of conceptions. The main issue, I think, is not the 'how' of God's presence with or on the ark, but the *fact* of it, which is *symbolised* by the ark, but not restricted to it any more than to the tent or the temple in later Israelite history.

2.1.3. The so-called 'Ark Narrative' (1 Sm 4-6 and 2 Sm 6)

The term 'Ark Narrative' goes back to Leonard Rost, who in 1926 proposed that 1 Samuel 4-6 and 2 Samuel 6 form a cult legend telling the story of the ark from its removal from Shiloh until its installation in Jerusalem by David. For a long time this theory remained almost unchallenged, and only in recent decades has there been significant research which led to modifications of this theory (see Stirrup 2000:81-84 for more details). The frequency of the word 'ark' in 1 Sam 4-6 (24 times) and 2 Samuel 6 (13 times)¹² supports the idea that there was an 'ark narrative'. However, it is debatable whether one can argue that 2 Samuel 6 forms its conclusion¹³ or indeed whether these chapters are the only ones belonging to this corpus.¹⁴ However, it is beyond the scope and purpose

¹⁰ For a more detailed argument of the fact that the טַרְ, פֹּקֵ' symbolises atonement, see Averbeck (1997, in particular at 699) who argues that 'place of atonement' or 'atonement seat' might be a better translation for טַרְ, פֹּקֵ' since propitiation (from which the LXX term 'propitiatory' derives) is not the main focus of the verb רָפַק

¹¹ On the other hand, the law was in fact publicly displayed. For example, Jos 8:32 reports that the law was written on stones, and there was also a provision in Dt 31:26 that instructed the people to place the book of the law *beside* the ark. However, I do not think that this detracts from the basic symbolism I mentioned.

¹² The statistics in this paragraph are based on an electronic word search I conducted on the word אֲרֹן in H. Van Dyke Parunak, Richard Whitaker, Emanuel Tov, Alan Groves, et al, eds, *The Michigan-Claremont-Westminster Hebrew Bible with Westminster Morphology. A Revised Version of Biblica Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Hebrew Text, Copyright 1990 Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft Stuttgart. Morphological Data, Copyright 1995 Westminster Theological Seminary. Logos Library System. 1995.

¹³ Wellhausen had already argued that 2 Samuel 6, though similar to 1 Sm 4-6, belongs to a different source (c f Stirrup 2000:87). Stirrup (ibid.) and Gitay (1992:230) consider the ark narrative to be restricted to 1 Sm 4:1b-7:1.

¹⁴ For example, in Jos 3-6 the word אֲרֹן occurs 16 times. However, it seems that these chapters are not normally included in research concerning the ark narrative. Unfortunately, the scope of this work does not permit going into the details of such an argument.

of this paper to investigate these issues further. I simply wish to examine briefly the occurrences of the phrase 'Ark of the Covenant' in these chapters.

It is interesting to note that the term 'Ark of the Covenant' only appears in 1 Samuel 4:3-5. The Israelites had been severely defeated by the Philistines (1 Sm 4:2) and the question arose, 'Why has the LORD defeated us today before the Philistines?' (v 3, NKJV - more literally: 'Why have we been defeated by the Lord today before the Philistines?'). The elders somehow realised that it was God who delivered them to their enemies. Nevertheless, this realisation did not involve heart-searching to find out why Yahweh had allowed the defeat, but merely the desire to get the ark from Shiloh. Their idea was that with the ark present, victory would be certain. Three times the phrase 'ark of the covenant' occurs, once qualified by significant additional phrases.

The first time (v 3) the ark is simply the $hw:hy\ddot{O} \text{ tyriB}] \div /ra \}$. It obviously symbolises the container of the tablets of the law, but also, in the eyes of the people, the presence of their God, Yahweh, with them, to give them victory. This is evident in the designation $uybiruK] h' bvey\ddot{a} \text{ t/ab;x}] hw:hy\ddot{O} \text{ AtyriB}] \div /ra \}$ (v 4, ark of the covenant of the Lord of Hosts who dwells among/above the Cherubim'). Stirrup (2000:89) observes that the ark was 'to remind Yahweh of his covenant commitments to his people Israel and particularly of his responsibility to ensure *their* victory in holy war' (emphasis his). But perhaps there is more to it than this. Yahweh is 'the Lord of Hosts', or armies. This term may of course refer to the heavenly armies but in this context, the Israelites probably took it to refer to their own armies who if led by Yahweh himself would surely be successful against their enemies. In addition, Yahweh is described as 'the one who dwells on/above/among the Cherubim', referring to the $\text{tr, Pok}'$ which covered the ark and represented God's *presence* as well as his *guidance*: it was from there Yahweh spoke to Moses to give him his commands for Israel. Stirrup (2000:89) notes that the expanded title for the ark 'emphasises the majesty, power and authority of Yahweh, the heavenly king' who is being 'rudely reminded of his covenantal duties.' In other words, the ark was obviously conceived of as a sort of talisman, a 'good luck charm' - and there was a rude awakening on the part of Israel when they realised that it was not!

After this incident, the phrase 'ark of the covenant' does not occur again in the Ark Narrative. The Philistines obviously considered it as some sort of image of Israel's God, but they quickly realised that Yahweh was different from their own god(s). Few chapters in the Hebrew Bible exhibit such irony, even sarcasm, as do 1 Samuel 5 and 6. The power of Yahweh is described in stark contrast to the powerless image of the god Dagon of the Philistines. The ark therefore, is shown to represent Yahweh's presence, but it is also clear that Yahweh will not be manipulated, contrary to the beliefs of both Israelites and Philistines.

2.1.4. The Ark in the remainder of Samuel and Kings

Only once, in 1 Samuel 14:18, is Saul reported to ask for the Ark to be brought to him to inquire of the Lord. Obviously, during Saul's reign the Ark had almost no importance as an object of

veneration.¹⁵ For David on the other hand it is a significant religious article. In 2 Samuel 6, a chapter often considered the conclusion of the Ark Narrative, he moves the Ark from Baale Judah (or Kirjath Jearim) to Jerusalem, his new capital city. David's reverence for the ark as a cult object and as a symbol of the presence of the Lord is evident in the way he expresses his worship before it (2 Sm 6:14-15) and his wish to build a house for it (2 Sm 7:2). He appears to have been regarded as the patron of the ark, since it was carried out after him when he had to leave Jerusalem during Absalom's revolt (2 Sm 15:24-25). However, he ordered that it be brought back into the city, in the hope that he would see it again.

Solomon finally built the temple of which David had dreamt, and thus a suitable place for the Ark was finally constructed. However, with the placing of the Ark in the Holy of Holies, it moves out of sight not only for the ordinary Israelite but also for the Deuteronomist historians, never to be mentioned again after 1 Kings 8. In this chapter, the title 'Ark of the Covenant' (ḥw:hyō ÷ /ra}), or 'Ark of the Covenant of the Lord' (ḥw:hyōAtyriB] ÷ /ra}) is used for the last time in these books. The significance of 1 Kings 8 will be discussed below.

2.2. *tyriB]* in the book of Joshua

In Joshua 1-6, the word *tyriB]* only occurs in the phrase 'Ark of the Covenant'. The ark goes before the people as they enter the Promised Land and capture the first city in the land, Jericho. In these chapters, the ark clearly symbolises to the people the visible representation of Yahweh who goes before them and fights for them. Rendtorff (2001:94) aptly remarks that the whole procedure of crossing the Jordan and capturing the city of Jericho has the character of a cultic act. The people are called to sanctify themselves (Jos 3:5), and the priests carry the ark before the people, as they cross the Jordan, in the same way the people crossed the Reed Sea after the Exodus, on dry ground. The significance of the ark in the crossing incident is pointed out in Joshua 3:10-11: it is the symbol that Yahweh is going with and before the people and will drive out their enemies before them. In other words, where the ark is, there Yahweh, in all his majesty and holiness, is present too (c f also von Rad 1975:237).

2.2.1. Joshua 6-7: The sin of Achan

The importance of the role of the ark becomes immediately apparent in Joshua 6-7. These chapters deal with the attack of Israel on Ai and the reasons for their initial defeat. Although the word covenant is not mentioned in chapter 6, it is obvious that the concept is nevertheless implied. The Ark of the Covenant is present and carried before the Israelites as they circle the city of Jericho for

¹⁵ It is indeed interesting that the LXX reads 'ephod' in 1 Sm 14:18. If this were the original reading it would be even stronger evidence for the fact that Saul did not consider it as important, at least for himself and those with him. However, a very different interpretation of the use of 'ephod' in this and other instances in 1 and 2 Samuel is given by van der Toorn & Houtman. They argue that 'ephod' may be another designation for 'ark' and that there were actually two incompatible ark traditions, in one of which the word 'ark' was substituted by 'ephod'. Their argument is very interesting and deserves further investigation, but the limited scope of this work does not permit evaluating it in detail here.

seven days. As such, it was a visible reminder to the Israelites not only of the presence of Yahweh with them, but also of the covenant and its stipulations and demands upon them. That this is so is evident in the way that chapter 7 connects with chapter 6.

The first occurrence of a $\text{tyr}iB]$ between God and man in the book of Joshua is in Joshua 7:11. At this point, Joshua is in distress because of the defeat of the Israelites by the people of Ai. He prays to God, lying on his face, but Yahweh tells him to get up and realise that Israel has been defeated because they have sinned ($\text{laer} ; c] y I \text{ af} ; j ;$) and ‘transgressed My covenant ($\text{ytiy}r i B] \text{ Ata, } W r b] [; \mu g \frac{3}{4} w \bar{O}$) which I commanded them ($\mu t ; / a \text{ ytiy} W I x i \text{ rv, a}$)).’ The question that arises is what covenant is referred to here? It seems that it is not the one made at Sinai or Moab, since there is no commandment in either of these that prohibits the taking of spoil when capturing enemy territory. The stipulations in mind are rather instructions in Joshua 6:18-19 where the Lord commands the people not to take any of the spoils of the city of Jericho, but to devote them entirely to Yahweh. Thus, in Joshua 7, the word $\text{tyr}iB]$ is used for a *specific commandment* given by Yahweh to the people at a particular point in time. This commandment is not part of the particular stipulations of the covenant made at Mt Sinai. Yet, a curse was put on anyone who disobeyed it. In other words, it seems to follow from this scripture that any commandment or stipulation from Yahweh, whenever given to the people, is to be considered a $\text{tyr}iB]$. Therefore, in this context, the word $\text{tyr}iB]$ would be better translated ‘stipulation’ or ‘commandment’.

The question, however, arises why the author of Joshua did not choose such a word as $\text{hw} : x] m i$ which might have equally well conveyed the idea of God’s stipulations being broken. Why $\text{tyr}iB]$? I suggest that the reason may be that since Israel was God’s chosen nation with whom he had entered into covenant at Mt Sinai (and renewed it with their descendants in Moab), they were obliged to obey him at all times and whenever he spoke to them. That a particular stipulation was not written in the covenant code did not matter in the least. The people had promised to submit to God and obey him. Therefore, if God told them to do something - the people had to do it. The principle behind this is that whoever fails to obey one law, has broken the whole covenant (see Dt 27:26 and Ja 2:10).

The words used in conjunction with $\text{tyr}iB]$ here are those familiar from Pentateuchal use: the people have broken ($W r b] [;$) the covenant, i.e. transgressed, stepped over the mark. God had commanded it ($\text{ytiy} W I x i \text{ rv, a}$), which implies there were one or more rules that he expected them to keep. It is also interesting that the content of the $\text{tyr}iB]$ is not explicitly mentioned. It is assumed that the reader knows which $\text{tyr}iB]$ is referred to and that he is familiar with its contents. This may be an indication that while a particular commandment was broken by the Israelites in the context of Joshua 7, the covenant referred to is not just that commandment but the relationship the Israelites entered into with Yahweh on Mt Sinai, which was renewed when the people entered the land (Jos 5 - the circumcision ceremony).

2.2.2. The ‘ban’ (μr , jē) in Joshua 6-7

Before considering the next occurrence of tyriB in Joshua, the importance of the word $\mu r , j e$ needs to be discussed. Joshua 6:17-18 speaks of Joshua’s injunction to the people that the city of Jericho was devoted to the ban ($\text{hw:hyl} \text{ } \text{HB;Arv,a} \text{ } \text{Alk;w\ddot{O}} \text{ } \text{ayhi} \mu r , j e \text{ } \text{ry[ih; ht;y\ddot{O}h;w\ddot{O}}$). Normally, the word $\mu r , j e$ (usually translated ‘ban,’ but perhaps better rendered ‘devoted thing’) means a thing completely consecrated to the Lord, and in the case of war this involved the utter destruction of living beings, and for valuables their dedication to the house of God.¹⁶ Wiseman (1982:120) notes that the ban involved forbidding contact with an abomination or holy thing. The ban may have been extended to absolutely everything, as at Jericho, but in other instances, only people and animals were affected by it, while the remainder of the spoils were given to the Israelites as booty.¹⁷ Because Achan took some of the devoted items from the spoils of Jericho, not only he himself, but the whole nation became ‘devoted’ (or rather, accursed) and could only be cleared by removing the sinner from its midst. This is the normal interpretation of this incident. However, I suggest that there may be another aspect to it.

According to Leviticus 23:15-22, the firstfruits of the harvest each year were to be consecrated to the Lord and given to the priests, as tokens of appreciation and gratitude of the worshipper for God’s goodness to him. The worshipper had to forego the use of the firstfruits and give them to Yahweh, but the remainder of the harvest was for him. It seems to me that the same principle applied to the spoils of the city of Jericho. Jericho was the first of all the cities of Canaan to fall into the hands of Israel, and as such, it was considered the ‘firstfruits’ of the new land which was to be devoted to the Lord. The city with everything it contained was considered the ‘firstfruits’ of all the other spoils the Israelites would be allowed to take in the process of conquering the land. Therefore, they were ‘holy to the Lord’, set apart for him, and not to be profaned by common usage. By giving the spoils of Jericho over to Yahweh, the Israelites would show their gratitude to him for their deliverance from slavery and God’s presence with them throughout the wilderness wanderings. It also would show their trust in Yahweh that, as he had allowed them to conquer this first city in the land, he would grant them further victories and ultimately the possession of the whole land. This theory is supported by the fact that in the other accounts of conquering cities, Israel was allowed to keep the spoils for themselves (for example Jos 8:2, 11:14).

¹⁶ The practice is attested in other ancient Near Eastern nations as well. For example, the Mesha Stele reports that the king of Moab consecrated a city to his national god Chemosh (Thompson 1982:789) and a military commander at Mari proclaims a ‘ban’ on the spoils of war (c f Hess 1996:42-43).

¹⁷ Where a person, like Rahab, acknowledged the power of Yahweh and devoted himself or herself to him, the ban did not need to be carried out (see Hess 1996:133 for more details).

2.2.3. Joshua 8: Covenant renewal at Mt Ebal

Although the word $\text{tyr}i\text{B}$] only occurs in the phrase ‘Ark of the Covenant’ in this chapter, it is generally acknowledged that verses 30-35 represent a covenant renewal ceremony and as such this occasion is a fulfilment of Dt 27:1-8. Interestingly, the festival took place on Mt Ebal, at whose foot was situated the city of Shechem, where another covenant renewal was celebrated at the end of the book (Jos 24). The ceremony described in Joshua 8 involved the writing and reading of all the commandments of Moses to the people, the offering of sacrifices and the presentation of the blessings and curses of the covenant. The Ark of the Covenant of the Lord here not only symbolises the *presence* of Yahweh with the people, but also, I think, the *covenant* between Yahweh and the people. The people stand on either side of the ark, as if to demonstrate that they and the Lord belong together. With the repetition of the blessings and the curses by the people, they also acknowledge their commitment to the covenant.

However, I think that the event is more than just a covenant renewal in the sense that the Mosaic covenant was being reconfirmed with the generation that entered the Promised Land. In my opinion, it is significant that in our present text it comes *after* the covenant breach in chapters 6-7.¹⁸ The transgression of the covenant had been suitably punished in chapter 7, but the relationship between the people and Yahweh that had been broken needed to be renewed, and this is what is taking place in this chapter.

2.2.4. Joshua 9: The covenant between Israel and the Gibeonites

In Joshua 9, the Gibeonites trick Joshua and Israel into making a covenant with them ($\text{Wnl;AWtr}Ki \text{ tyr}i\text{B}$]). The word $\text{tr}k$ is the common word used for making a covenant. In this context, the covenant is between two human parties, in the form of a suzerain-vassal treaty. Weinfeld (1975:256) notes that the preposition l in contrast to the preposition b in the term $\text{l tyr}i\text{B}] \text{ tr}k$ (literally ‘make a covenant for or to’) indicates the ‘imposition of terms upon the vassal or the subordinated’. This is also evident in this chapter. Although the Gibeonites take the initiative, it is clear from the context ($\text{Wnj}n:a\} \text{ } \delta\text{y}\text{d},\text{b}; [\}$, v. 8) and the stipulations in verse 15 that they are not imposing but asking for covenant conditions. They are the vassals, Israel the suzerain. Therefore, the translation ‘treaty’ is more applicable here than ‘covenant’. The elders of the Israelites confirm the covenant with an oath ($\text{hd}; [eh; \text{yaeycin}\bar{\text{O}} \mu\text{h}, \text{l}; \text{W}[b]V; \text{YIw}''$, v. 15), but we do not hear of a similar oath by the Gibeonites. The result of the oath is that despite the command to put every living person to the ban, the covenant agreement between the Israelites and the Gibeonites has precedence, and so the

¹⁸ The only exception to this is 4 QJos^a, where 8:34-35 come before a non-biblical text, 5:2-7, 6:5-10, 7:12-17, 8:3-14 and 10:2-5, 8-11 (see Hess 1996:19-20). This fact has led some scholars to conclude that there may have been different recensions of the book of Joshua. Trebolle Barrera (2000:96) thinks this order may be earlier than MT, and the same opinion is voiced in Abegg, Flint & Ulrich (1999:201-202). On the other hand, in view of the fragmentary nature of the manuscript and the difficulty to assign the non-biblical material to a biblical text it may well be, as Hess (ibid.) suggests, that these fragments of Joshua are part of a midrashic or ‘parabiblical’ text.

Gibeonites are allowed to live, albeit as slaves. The condition to let the Gibeonites live¹⁹ reflects Ancient Near Eastern custom, especially of Egypt, whereby 'life' included both theological and economic aspects (Hess 1996:180-181).

2.2.5. Joshua 23-24: Joshua's farewell speech and the covenant at Shechem

The last two chapters of Joshua contain Joshua's farewell speech to the nation and the (renewal of the) covenant at Shechem. The farewell speech is similar to those of other leaders in the Old Testament: before him Jacob, Joseph, Moses and later David. Joshua summarises the good things Yahweh has done for Israel in leading them to the Promised Land and driving out other nations before them. The possession of the land is the proof for the Israelites of God's faithfulness and fulfilment of his part of the covenant to them. Now his injunction to them is to be as faithful to the Lord as he has been to them. However, if they violate the covenant (Jos 23:16, NIV, אַתָּא, מִכְּרַבְּיָהוּ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיכֶם) that the Lord commanded them (מִכְּטַא, הַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ) then Yahweh's anger will burn against them (מִכְּבֵּי אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה) and he will in effect remove them (אֲרַחֵם מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ) from the land. In other words, the covenant curses (cf Lv 26 and Dt 28) will come into operation. Here the covenant is something that has been commanded (הַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ), and therefore, by implication, entails conditions and rules which are to be followed. These rules are generally defined as those 'written in the Book of the Law of Moses,' but two are emphasised particularly: not to worship other gods and not to have close relationships (מִכְּבֵּי אֱלֹהֵינוּ) with the nations left in the land.

The word *qbd* is used for the relationship between husband and wife in Genesis 2:24, and also often for the kind of relationship Yahweh expects from his people (cf Dt 11:22, 30:20, Jos 22:5, 23:8). The idea is 'to cling to', 'to hold fast to', in other words, an intimate and close relationship where there are no secrets among the people involved. When the word is used with reference to cleaving to the Lord, it is often in connection with the command for obedience to his commandments. In other words, the person 'holding fast' to the Lord does so practically by obeying his word. Therefore, to cling (*qbd*) to other nations would be tantamount to treason, since the people would then no longer rely on the Lord, but on these other nations (and their gods). Thus, while not used very often in this manner, the word *qbd* may be considered a covenant term in certain contexts.

Unlike Joshua 23, which is usually attributed to the Deuteronomist, Joshua 24 seems to be based on an old literary stratum which dates back to a time when the tradition was still passed on orally (BW Anderson 1988:142). However, this theory has been challenged. Various scholars have identified Joshua 24 as a 'ninth century northern text..., a seventh-century Deuteronomistic document... or the work of a sixth-century exilic Yahwist...' (Hess 1996:299). This variety of

¹⁹ The same condition applied to Rahab in Jos 2:13-14.

opinions does not inspire confidence in the precise dating of this chapter. The designation of Joshua 24 as a covenant renewal ceremony has also come under fire by scholars who doubt that such a festival existed before the emergence of Israel in Canaan. However, the close affinity of this chapter with ancient Hittite, not Assyrian, treaties points to the fact that the traditions behind it are ancient, even if the text itself is later (see Hess 1996:30-31,49-51, 299-300).

As far as literary features are concerned, Joshua 24 is related to the previous chapter by mention of the same people (elders, leaders, judges and officials in particular) who were gathered by Joshua to hear what he had to say. Otherwise, the content of the two chapters is quite different. Joshua 24 is organised in a form similar to Ancient Near Eastern, in particular Hittite, vassal treaties. After introducing Yahweh as the speaker (verse 2a, the 'preamble'), it starts with a recounting of the history of Yahweh with Israel (verses 2b-13, the 'historical prologue'). There follow some of the stipulations of the covenant (verses 14-15, 19-21, 23, the 'stipulations')²⁰ and a list of witnesses (verses 22-23). In accordance with Mosaic theology, this list included only the Israelites themselves. There is no explicit list of blessings or curses, though Joshua warns the people that Yahweh is a holy and jealous God who will not forgive their transgressions and sins or tolerate a rival god beside him (verses 19-20). However, despite these analogies, one must remember that this is *not a covenant document*, but a *recounting* of the conclusion of a $\text{tyr} \dot{\text{i}} \text{B}$]. Therefore, it is little wonder that some aspects of normal covenant documents are missing (blessings) or only very brief (the curses and the preamble).

Apart from being a covenant (renewal) ceremony, there is, as BW Anderson (1988:144) aptly remarks, probably more to Joshua 24 than meets the eye. It is interesting that nowhere in Joshua or Judges is Shechem mentioned as being captured or even attacked. It seems that the inhabitants of this city were from the beginning on friendly terms with Israel, and indeed there are traditions in Genesis that link the Patriarchs with it, in particular Abraham (Gn 12:6-7) and Jacob (Gn 33-34). Thus, there may not have been any need to conquer this territory, because the Israelites who had escaped from Egypt found friends and relatives there who now joined them. Because of this, the command of Joshua 'Choose for yourselves this day, whom you will serve...' may have special significance. It may have been an offer to those Israelites who lived at Shechem to join the covenant community. But, if they did so, they would have to renounce their religious affiliation to the gods of Canaan or their forefathers ($\mu\kappa, \text{B}] \text{r}] \text{q} \dot{\text{i}} \text{B}] \text{rv}, \text{a}\} \text{rk} ; \text{NEh}' \text{yhel} \grave{\text{a}} \text{ô} \text{a} \text{t} \text{a}, \text{Wrysih}$), and become devoted to Yahweh alone. It is difficult to imagine that the issue of worshipping other gods had not been raised by Moses and Joshua before this incident. However, if a number of people were accepted into the Israelite community who had not had first hand experience of the exodus and the conquest so far, it is more understandable. These people would be adopted into the Israelite community by concluding a covenant that cemented the friendly and even family relations between the inhabitants of Shechem and the Israelite invaders.

²⁰ In verse 25 it is reported that Joshua drew up 'decrees and laws' for them, but no details of these are given. The reader is expected to be familiar with them, so probably the law codes of Exodus 21-24, Leviticus and Deuteronomy, (or their prototypes) are in mind.

In this connection, Miller (2000:6) observes that the concept of covenant between Yahweh and Israel was not just a political structure, though it was that too, but also an expression of kinship relations. He says: 'If relationships in ancient Israel were first of all governed by kinship...so that family and tribe were the central social units, the covenant was the legal way of effecting what Cross has called "kinship-in-law". That is, covenant was the mode whereby someone or some group not part of the kinship unit was brought into it, a legal means of creating a new kinship bond between persons.' This seems to be what happened in Joshua 24. In order to cement the new relationship between the 'exodus group' and the Shechemites, the history of the exodus group was related to the whole congregation at Shechem. In addition, the covenant laws and stipulations needed to be given and explained to them. In this way, the people were all included in the history of the nation and identified themselves with the entity called 'Israel'. So the covenant at Shechem was for some a re-affirmation of their affiliation to Yahweh and a grateful response to what the Lord had done for them in the past, while for others it constituted, so to speak, an 'adoption' into the covenant community.

The author of Joshua 24 uses well-known covenant terminology. Although the word 'oath' is not mentioned explicitly, it is obvious from the context that the people were swearing an oath when they promised twice with almost the same words to follow the Lord. The word order in the Hebrew indicates the emphatic nature of their statements ([m;v]nI /l/qb]W dbo[}n" Wnyhel;ã hw:hyÒAta,, , Jos 24:24), and one may therefore safely conclude that an oath is in mind. Joshua then 'made a covenant for them' (μ[;l; tyriB] ['vu/hyÒ trok]YIW), in other words, he set out the stipulations and rules for the people, and wrote them down (fP;v]miW qjō /l μC,Y:w). As in Joshua 7, we are not told what exactly these stipulations and commandments contained, though it is likely that the written document included at least part of Joshua's speech in verses 215. The terms included the injunction not to worship other gods because Yahweh had fulfilled his promise (made earlier to the patriarchs and the exodus group - see below) to give them the land in which they now lived. As for any other, and more detailed, stipulations, it is assumed that the reader knows the content of the tyriB] concluded in Joshua 24. The writing down and depositing the covenant in the house of the gods that were witnesses to it was one of the demands of covenant making in the Ancient Near East. We are, however, not told explicitly that Joshua actually deposited the covenant in the House of God at Shechem (though it is likely that he did), only that he erected a stone that was to serve as a witness to the covenant making ceremony.

One last observation may be made with regard to Joshua 24. Although the people promise to serve the Lord, we are not told that they actually obeyed Joshua's command to get rid of their other gods (and, by implication, their images). The people obviously decided to 'sit on the fence' so to speak, and see whether it was really better to serve Yahweh. To quote from a previous essay (Linnington 2003a): 'Unlike Jacob's family (Gn 35:1-4) [the people] were obviously not willing to go the whole way in abandoning their other gods. This seems to indicate on the one hand that there was

“*religionsinterner Pluralismus*” but also that obviously the result of the covenant procedure was not what was expected in terms of undivided allegiance to Yahweh. Therefore, though perhaps some people were wholeheartedly committed to serving Yahweh alone, others, apparently the majority, did not do so. It seems that, while there was a ‘Yahweh-alone party’, as Smith (1971) calls it, it did not start with a great many adherents. The people were willing to accept Yahweh, perhaps even as the supreme god, but not as the exclusive and only god....’ Thus, the scene is set for the continued stories of apostasy in the books of Judges, Samuel and Kings.

2.2.6. The Promise of the Land

Before moving on to the other books of the ‘Deuteronomic History’, the role of the land in the covenant provisions needs to be emphasised. This is important for the understanding of a number of scriptures containing the word *tyrīb*] in these (and other) biblical books.

From the beginning, in the history as it is presented in the Bible, the land is an important aspect of the covenant promises. One could go so far as to say that hardly a covenant (at least between God and humans) exists in which this topic does not play a major role. In the covenant with Noah (Gn 9:8-17) God binds himself never again to destroy the earth through floodwaters because the land (here the whole earth) is necessary for the survival of the human race. However, admittedly, there is no promise to give any specific piece of land to Noah. The two covenants with Abraham in Genesis 15 and 17 make the land part of the three promises of Yahweh to Abraham. ‘...[T]he Lord made a covenant with Abraham, saying: ‘To your descendants I have given this land...’ (Gn 15:18-19a; also 15:7). ‘Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession...’ (Gn 17:8).²¹ This promise of the land is repeated to Isaac in Genesis 16:3-4 and to Jacob in Genesis 28:13 and 35:12. Later, Yahweh tells Moses in Exodus 3:8, ‘...I have come down to deliver [the Israelites] out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land *to a good and large land*, to a land flowing with milk and honey...’ (my emphasis). In Exodus 6:4 Yahweh speaks to Moses regarding the covenant he will make with the children of Israel, ‘to give them the land of Canaan.’ In the ‘book of the covenant’ (Ex 20-23) the Lord delineates the borders of the land and then forbids Israel to make alliances with the inhabitants of Canaan lest they ensnare them to follow other gods (Ex 23:31-33). Many of the blessings and curses in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 concern the land.²²

The possession of the land through Joshua is in fact a fulfilment of Yahweh’s promise to the patriarchs (see Jos 1:6, 21:43; c f also Kutsch 1974:184). However, continued possession of the land for Israel is coupled with the exclusive worship of Yahweh and the keeping of his commandments (see for example Dt 29). It is interesting to note that the prohibition of making a

²¹ The two other promises to Abraham are many descendants (Gn 15:4-5; 17:2) and God’s assurance that He will be Abraham’s (and his descendants’) God and Abraham’s descendants will be his people (Gn 15:1, 17:7-8), in other words, a personal relationship. See Kutsch 1974:383.

²² All Scripture references in this paragraph are quoted from the NKJV.

covenant with the inhabitants of the land Yahweh was to give Israel is coupled with the potential idolatry that would ensue from such a treaty (e.g. Ex 34:12-16). Obedience to Yahweh therefore, in one sense, means separation from the nations. The result of obedience is that Yahweh will bless them in the land. However, if Israel departs from the law, and in particular the stipulation not to worship any other God, Yahweh will discipline them, firstly by afflicting the land in which they live, but secondly, if this is to no avail, by removing them from the land (c.f. the increasingly more severe curses in Leviticus 26). This outworking of the covenant blessings, and even more the curses, is amply illustrated in the books of Judges, Samuel and Kings.

2.3. *tyrîB*] in the Book of Judges

There is surprisingly little mention of the word *tyrîB*] in the book of Judges. Yet it is clear that the incidents related in this book are based on the premise of covenant and the faithfulness to it that Israel promised when they agreed to worship Yahweh in Joshua 24. The book starts in chapter 1 with recounting the possession of the land by the Israelites, in accordance with the promise of Yahweh to give it to them. However, since they did not follow the command of Yahweh to drive out the people from the land, but let them stay (Jdg 1:21, 27, 29-33), the scene is set for the sad story of the repeated cycles of apostasy-distress-cry to God-deliverance that Judges (and in lesser degree, but still discernible, also Samuel and Kings) portrays.

Chapter 2 opens with Yahweh coming in the form of an angel (or messenger) and accusing Israel of disobeying his commandments, given for example in Exodus 24:32 and Deuteronomy 12:3, where Israel was told not to make treaties (*tyrîB*]) with the Canaanites and to tear down the altars of the foreign gods. But Israel had done the opposite. They had made covenants²³ with the Canaanites (e.g. Jos 9) and instead of tearing down the foreign altars ‘they forsook the Lord...and served Baal and the Ashtorets’ (Jdg 2:12-13).

The terms used in Judges 2:1-2 are those well known from the Pentateuch. It is however interesting that Yahweh’s promise is cast in negative, rather than positive terms: *ytyryrîB*] *rpea*; *Aal*çç *ul*;/[*l*] *uk*,*T*] *ai*. The word *rrp* is the most common Hebrew term for the violation of the covenant (c.f. Williams 1997:696), but it is usually used of the Israelites doing so. But, not only does Yahweh say he will not break the covenant, he also affirms that he will *never ever* (*ul*;/[*l*]) do so. Israel for her part, instead of being thankful to Yahweh and obeying his word, failed to listen to his voice (*ylyiqoB*] *uT*, [*]**m*'*v*] *Aal*çwð). The contrast between Yahweh and Israel could hardly have been expressed in stronger terms. The consequence of their action is put in interesting terms. Yahweh does not completely abandon the nation as they have abandoned him. However, he will no longer keep one part of his side of the covenant, which was to help Israel fight and dispossess the Canaanites. On the contrary, since they

²³ A better translation for the *tyrîB*] with the other nations would be ‘treaties’, but the same translation emphasises the offence more.

were so intent on living with them, this would be exactly what would happen - only, it would not be to their advantage as they thought. The people reacted with weeping and sacrifices, but it is clear from the context of the chapter and the book that these actions did not signify true repentance, which would have been followed by appropriate action. They merely indicated remorse at the fact that Yahweh was no longer with them to give them victory over the Canaanites.

The seriousness of the people's apostasy is also indicated in the fact that Judges chapter 2 begins and ends with the Lord's accusation of their breach of covenant and the concomitant result of Yahweh's refusal to help the Israelites to drive out the other nations from before them. If anything, the wording in verses 20-22 is even stronger than that at the beginning of the chapter. In verses 1 and 2, Israel is accused directly in the second person plural, ('What is this you have done?' - $\mu\tau, yci[] \tau aZ\alpha h m'$). No direct answer is forthcoming, however, only weeping and sacrifice, which was not followed by action to show a change of attitude.

Verses 6-19 then summarise in essence the book of Judges, and verses 20-22 conclude with a renewed speech of the Lord, this time however in the third person singular. Yahweh no longer addresses the people personally, but either muses to himself or speaks through a (not mentioned) third party to them. The relationship is no longer the close one that Yahweh expects to have with them. The impression created is that of a great distance between Yahweh and the people. This is heightened by the use of 'this nation' ($hZ^2 h' y/Gh'$), a phrase normally used for nations other than Israel. In other words, they had already, *de facto*, become 'like the other nations' (cf 1 Sm 8:5) as far as Yahweh was concerned. They had transgressed ($Wrb[] ;$) his covenant 'which I commanded their fathers' ($\mu\tau ; /ba\}Ata, ytiyWixi rv, a\} ytiyriB\}Ata,)$ and had not heeded his voice ($\gamma li / q l] W[m]v ; a l \zeta w \delta$) - all typical covenant terminology familiar from the Pentateuch. The covenant was 'commanded', i.e. it entailed conditions that needed to be fulfilled, and one of the common words for breaking the covenant, $rb[$, is used.

Obviously, the reference here is to the Sinai covenant, including the stipulations concerning not making treaties with other nations and the prohibition of the worship of other gods. However, these stipulations are only implicit, they are not mentioned explicitly. The consequences of the breach are given in similar terms as in verse 3: $\mu y I / Gh' A \div mi \mu h, y n E P] mi v y a i v y r i / h l] ^1 y s i / a a l \zeta y n I a \} A \mu G$. Yet again, the wording is worth noting. The word vry in the Hiphil is apparently normally used to denote Israel's possession of the land (and thus dispossessing others). Here however, Yahweh says that he will 'not cause a (single) man of them to dispossess (any of) the nations before them' (my translation). What a contrast to the promise of Leviticus 26:5 where Yahweh promises that 'a hundred of you shall put ten-thousand to flight'. On the contrary, the nations will be a 'test' for Israel, so that they can prove whether or not they will keep Yahweh's commandments, as their fathers kept ($W r m] v ;$) them. The rest of the book proves that they did not obey Yahweh but time and again fell away. Yet, Yahweh in his

mercy delivered them over and over again to show them that he would indeed keep his covenant with them, though chastisement was necessary. They had broken ‘off’ (רָפְהֵה) the covenant with him, as it were, but Yahweh would hold on to them.

The word **tyrīb]** occurs four more times in Judges, three times in the title ‘Baal-Berith’ or ‘god Berith’, and once in connection with the Ark of the Covenant. However, the former expression does not fall within the parameters of this work, and the theme of the Ark of the Covenant has been covered already.

2.4. tyrīb] in the books of Samuel

In the books of Samuel the word **tyrīb]** occurs rather infrequently, though often the concept underlies the narrative, as for example in 2 Samuel 7, which deals with the so-called ‘Davidic’ covenant. In that chapter, the word **tyrīb]** does not feature at all, yet it is clear that it plays an important role. In 1 Samuel **tyrīb]** mainly appears in the phrase ‘ark of the covenant of the Lord’ (in the ‘Ark Narrative’, which has already been considered above) and in instances where the reference is to a covenant between people, like that of David with Saul’s son Jonathan.

2.4.1. Treaties between Israel and other human parties

In 1 Samuel 11:11, the people of Jabesh Gilead ask for a **tyrīb]** from the Ammonites, so they will be their servants. The NIV rightly translates **tyrīb]** with ‘treaty’ in this connection. The word used for *making* a treaty is **trk**, which in fact is used without **tyrīb]** in verse 2, showing that by itself, in the context of covenant/treaty, the word means ‘make a covenant’. Here the weaker party is asking for a **tyrīb]** from the stronger, but the conditions given are so hard that they refuse to accept it.

In 2 Samuel 3:12-13 Abner offers David a **tyrīb]** to bring all Israel under his control. The NIV very appropriately translates this as ‘agreement’ in both verses. The word used for making the agreement is again **trk**, and the content and conditions are clear: Abner will make the Israelites submit to David’s rule, while David demands his wife Michal back. In verse 21 Abner promises to assemble Israel before David and they will make a covenant (**tyrīb]** **òT]ai Wtr]k]yIwò**) with him and he will be king (**òv ,p]n" hW<a 'T]Arv ,a} lkoB] T;k]l 'm;W** - lit. ‘you will rule over all that your heart desires’). In this verse **tyrīb]** is translated ‘compact’, as it is in 2 Samuel 5:3, where David made a ‘compact’ (**tyrīb]** **ðwID; J]l ,M ,h' mh ,l; trok]YIw**) with the Israelites at Hebron, where he was anointed as king over them. The wording in this verse (**mh ,l; trok]YIw**) indicates that it was David who gave the terms of the covenant, which the people accepted. However, we are not

told what exactly these terms entailed. Verse 2 only states that David will ‘shepherd [the] people...and will become their ruler’ (NIV).

2.4.2. The covenant between David and Jonathan

In 1 Samuel 18:3, 20:8 and 16, 22:8 and 23:18 the reference is to a covenant that David made with Jonathan, Saul’s son. In the first of these scriptures, it says that ‘Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself’ (NIV; /vp]n"K] /tao /tb;h}a'B] tyriB] dWId;wō ÷t;n:/hyō trok]YIw"). The implication is that Jonathan, as the king’s son the person of higher standing, offered the covenant to David, who accepted it. It is not indicated further in this context what the content of this covenant was, but it did entail the giving of gifts to David, who received Jonathan’s robe and tunic as well as his sword, bow and belt. In chapter 20:8 David then refers to this covenant, asking Jonathan to ‘deal kindly’ (dS, j, t;yCi [;wō) with him because of the covenant they made together ‘before the Lord’.

A few verses later Jonathan has David reaffirm his covenant with ‘the house of David’ (1 Sm 20:16-17). The wording in these verses is interesting. Firstly, only the word *trk* is used, which NIV aptly translates ‘made a covenant’. The *tyriB]* entails the wish that the Lord will ‘call David’s enemies to account’. But there is also mention of an oath (['yBiv]h'), which Jonathan asks David to reaffirm (¹s, /Yw') to him. The main condition seems to be that of ‘love’ for one another, which I think entails mutual friendship and loyalty.

Saul, in 1 Samuel 22:8, refers to this covenant between Jonathan and David, but again only the word *trk* is used, correctly translated by NIV as ‘makes a covenant’. The last mention of the covenant between David and Jonathan is in 1 Samuel 23:18, where it is simply stated that ‘the two of them made a covenant before the Lord’. The context seems to indicate that Jonathan here acknowledges that David will be king over Israel, while he himself will be second, a friend and adviser probably, though no exact details are given as to the content of this *tyriB]*. That it was made ‘before the Lord’ implies that an oath confirmed it.

2.4.3. The Davidic Covenant

In a recent article (see Linington 2003a) I briefly highlighted some of the issues regarding the Davidic covenant when I discussed the historical development of Israelite religion. What I would like to do in the present context is to elaborate on this topic, and in particular to look at the context of the scriptures where the word *tyriB]* refers to the Davidic covenant. I will however include 2 Samuel 7 in this overview, even though the word *tyriB]* does not occur in this chapter, since it forms the origin of the whole topic (c f Clements 1965:56). Furthermore, I will also discuss Psalms 89 and 132 here rather than under the rubric of ‘*tyriB]* in the Wisdom books’ because they deal with the covenant between Yahweh and the royal house of David. After examining these texts, I shall then attempt an evaluation of the Davidic covenant.

2.4.3.1. 2 Samuel 7

The importance of 2 Samuel 7 for the further development of the history of Israel as it is presented in the books of Samuel and Kings cannot be overstated. All subsequent kings of Judah are compared with David, and repeatedly the author of Kings refers to the choice of David and Zion. Koch (1995:81) rightly points out that the 'Nathan oracle' had such repercussions in the later history of Israel that it finally became the source for the Messianic hope which continued into the writings of Qumran and of course forms the basis of the New Testament teaching of Christ.

The prophecy in 2 Samuel 7 must be viewed in connection with events not only in the preceding chapters, but in the books of Samuel as a whole, in the context of the theme of kingship in Israel. Human kingship in Israel is from the outset viewed in ambivalent terms. The mere request for a king in 1 Samuel 8 is considered a rejection of Yahweh, yet the wish is granted, and indeed the first two kings are divinely appointed and anointed. However, it is interesting that neither Saul nor David are called *king*, but *dygIn*: (1 Sm 9:16, 2 Sm 7:8²⁴) when God speaks about their kingship. Baldwin (1988:89) astutely observes that the 'word "king" is deliberately avoided because Yahweh was Israel's king.' The designation is, I think, also important in that it enables one to differentiate early Israelite kingship from that of the surrounding nations. Israel's king was not to be a law unto himself, but was to be governed by the law of Yahweh. As such he was therefore subject to the restraining influence of Yahweh's prophets. In other respects, however, Israelite kingship contained attributes similar to those found in other Ancient Near Eastern monarchies.

As elsewhere in the Ancient Near East, kingship in Israel was a sacral institution (c f Alibert 1996:175). Nevertheless, the king in Israel was never conceived of as god, which is evident in the fact that the first two kings were chosen by God and anointed by Yahweh's prophet.²⁵ Alibert (1996:176) however says:

Es ist immer wieder betont worden, daß ... Israel kein Gottkönigtum gekannt, der König vielmehr nur als Adoptivsohn Jahwes gegolten habe. Doch waren die Unterschiede eher fließend. Wohl ist in der israelitischen Königstheologie eine gewisse Scheu zu erkennen, den König völlig mit Jahwe zu identifizieren...doch hatte die Gottessohnschaft auch in Israel eindeutig eine physische Komponente...und eine mythische Dimension.

With this he refers mainly to Psalms 2:7 and 110:3. I wonder, however, whether it would not be better to interpret such references to 'physical or mythical dimensions' metaphorically instead of this rather literal approach. AA Anderson (1981:68) makes a valid point in observing that though Israelite kings were often criticised by the prophets they were never accused of claiming divinity. The phrase 'You are my son, today I have begotten you' (Ps 2:7) is rather to be seen as an

²⁴ David is called 'king' however in 1 Sm 16:1, where Samuel is sent to Jesse to anoint one of his sons as king over Israel.

²⁵ Only of Solomon are we told that he was similarly anointed as king, though not by a prophet but by the priest Zadok. All other kings in both kingdoms seem to have come into power either by descent (in Judah) or through other means of succession (including assassination of the previous ruler). The point here is the notion of a private anointing that precedes the public acclamation of the king.

adoption formula that was pronounced at the coronation ceremony. Weiser (1986:113) says that through the inclusion of the word 'today', the Psalmist excludes the idea of a physical begetting, though he still left the formula 'I have begotten you' intact. But 'he transforms the alien idea into the idea of adoption,...,into the declaration of the sonship of the king that took place on the day of his enthronement. By that act, special importance is attributed not to the person of the King but to his office' (Weiser 1986:113).

Dumbrell (1984:139) insightfully observes that the *private*²⁶ act of anointing of Israel's first two kings established, at first, not a relationship between the king and Israel, but between the king and God. Only later on in Saul's and David's careers is there also a public recognition of their office by the people (c f 1 Sm 11:15 for Saul; 2 Sm 3:12-21 and 5:3 for David). Albertz (1996:176-177) remarks that in the general royal theology of Jerusalem an exceptional relationship between the king and Yahweh was propagated that was quite independent from the relationship between Yahweh and the nation. The promise of Yahweh to the Davidic kings, as it is reported in 2 Samuel 7 and elsewhere, is in my opinion an explicit expression of this special relationship that was established in this way.

The textual history of 2 Samuel 7 is a difficult topic, and no consensus has been reached yet (see Albertz 1996:177). In the limited space available here it is impossible to discuss this theme. I shall adopt the view that 2 Samuel 7 is a unity and that it basically records an ancient tradition from the time of Solomon (c f Bright 1977:57). With this premise, I suggest the following tenets for the Davidic covenant as they are presented to us in that chapter.

After establishing his rule in Jerusalem and showing his reverence for Yahweh by bringing up the Ark of the Covenant into the city, David wanted to build a temple for the Lord, perhaps in line with the Ancient Near Eastern conception that it was the duty of a king to do so. This place for Yahweh was to be more permanent than the tent in which the ark had been housed and more prominent than the obscure place where it was found after more than 20 years, Kirjath Jearim. But, even the most permanent house (or temple) on earth is in the end doomed to perish. Thus, David was refused the honour of building a temple for Yahweh. The problem was that David had 'matters reversed. He had wanted to build Yahweh a house, when, in fact, it is Yahweh who will build him a house' (Bright 1977:56). And this 'house' for David would be more enduring than any earthly dwelling place could ever be.

In terms reminiscent of the historical prologue in Ancient Near Eastern treaty documents (c f Kruse 1985:150), Yahweh recounts the acts that he had performed for Israel in bringing them out of Egypt to their present abode. He had never demanded a permanent house to be built for him by any of the tribes. He continues to remind David of the things he had done for him personally. In the beginning, Yahweh took him from the sheepfold to be a leader (דַּיָּגֵן) over his people

²⁶ He refers to the anointing of Saul by Samuel in 1 Sm 10:1 and of David by Samuel in 1 Sm 16:13. In both cases the prophet and the king are present, the two of them alone in 1 Sm 10, while in 1 Sm 16 David's family was also there. Nevertheless, it was still a private, rather than a public affair at that time.

Israel. This was to be David's primary task, not the building of a house for Yahweh. Furthermore, Yahweh had removed all enemies from before David, granted him rest (2 Sm 7:9, 11),²⁷ and made his name great (ל/dG: ׀ve םל] yticil[;wō), a phrase that reminds us of the assurance to Abraham in Genesis 12:2 (the wording there is םm, v] hl;D]g¾a}w").

After this reminder of what Yahweh had already done for Israel and David, he then continues to tell David what he was still going to do for both his people in general and David in particular. To the nation, he would give a place where they can live in peace and without oppression from their enemies (2 Sm 7:10; c f Dt 12:10). To David, he promised to *make* (not build) him a house (2 Sm 7:11, NKJV; Hebrew hw:hyō םL]Ahc, [}y" tyIb').²⁸ What this making of a house entailed, is then elaborated on in the subsequent verses.

God would raise up (ytimoyqih}) the son who would come after David and establish (ytinæykih}w") his kingdom (2 Sm 7:12) and his throne (2 Sm 7:13) forever. In very emphatic language Yahweh expresses that this son would build Yahweh a temple (2 Sm 7:13 - ymiv]li tyIB'Ahn<b]yI aWh) - dare one say this is suggestive of the stipulations in the vassal treaties? The further promise that Yahweh would be his father and the king would be his son is reminiscent of the covenant formula (÷bel] yLiAhy<h]yI aWhwō ba;l] /LAhy<h]a, ynIa}). Analogous language is used in Genesis 17:7, where Abraham is promised that God will be his God, but it is even more similar to Exodus 6:7 (µyhil;ale µk,l; ytiyyIh;wō µ[;l] yli µk,t]a, yTij]q'l;wō) and other occurrences of the covenant formula (c f Albertz 1996:180, note 43 for a similar observation).

This promise led to the belief that the Davidic covenant was unconditional, and that this unconditional promise not only applied to the dynasty, but also extended to the existence of the nation as a whole. Brueggemann (1997:606) for example observes that '[w]hat is claimed [by describing the king as God's son] is that in the Davidic king, Yahweh has made a new and unconditional commitment to protect and prosper Israel.' He continues: 'The ideological dimension of this claim is that in order to receive such peace and prosperity, the well-being, prosperity, and authority of the king must be beyond criticism, celebrated in exuberant allegiance. This interpretive claim for what the king signifies radically alters the way in which Yahweh is understood to be in the midst of Israel.' A similar argument is advanced by Gileadi (1988: 159), who writes: 'In Davidic covenant theology the fate and welfare of the nation hinged on the king's loyalty to Yahweh,' and later (at 160): '[T]he Davidic covenant did away with the necessity that

²⁷ Though there is no direct verbal correspondence, this seems to be a fulfilment of the promise to Abraham in Gn 22:17: 'your descendants will possess the gate of their enemies' (NKJV; Hebrew תא ם[}r]z¾ vr'yIwō wyb;yōao r['v').

²⁸ Again, the wording is similar to that in Gn 12:2, where God promised to *make* Abram into a great nation (ל/dG: y/gl] םc][,a,wō).

all Israel - to a man - maintain loyalty to YHWH in order to merit his protection...the king stood as proxy between YHWH and his people.' That such reasoning was faulty is obvious from the prophetic messages which were addressed against the nation as a whole, and not only against kings.

If it is accepted that the prophecy in 2 Samuel 7 was given substantially as it is reported in the text available to us today, such reasoning would be what I call 'selective memory,' because it seems clear from 2 Samuel 7:14 that even sanctions for breach of covenant are included in these promises to David, though these are couched in very general terms: if the king commits iniquity (/t/[h'B]), God will chasten him 'with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men' (NKJV; Hebrew $\mu d ; a ; y n E B] y [e g \ddot{O} n I b] W \mu y v i n : a \} f b , v e B] w y T i j] k ' h o w \ddot{O}$). Although it is not explicitly mentioned, the condition for the fulfilment of Yahweh's promises is the obedience of the king to (apparently well-known) rules and stipulations. Obviously, a reference to the Sinai covenant is in view. Nevertheless, the existence of the dynasty is never in question, even if chastisement should be necessary for an individual king: 'My mercy shall not depart from him...' (2 Sm 7:15, NKJV; WNM, mi rWsy:Aal; yDis]j'w \ddot{O}).²⁹ The promise finishes with the repeated emphatic assurance that David's house, kingdom and throne will be established *forever* (2 Sm 7:16, $\delta y n < p ; l \mu l ; / [A d [' \delta T] k] l ' m] m ' W \delta t] y B e \div m ' a] n < w \ddot{O}] \mu l ; / [A d [' \div / k n : h y < h] y I \delta a \} s] K i$).

In the remainder of the chapter, David gives thanks to God for the revelation he has just received. He acknowledges Yahweh's greatness and uniqueness (verses 21-22) and affirms his redemptive acts in the exodus (verse 23). The point of this verse and the next is that Israel is God's own people *forever*, and he is their God, another reminder of the covenant formula (c f Rendtorff 1995b:34). One might interpret this section as the acceptance of the covenant given to David by Yahweh in the previous verses.

What is evident, I think, from this brief analysis of 2 Samuel 7 is its connection with general covenant language. The chapter does not merely depict a special case of the Sinai covenant (c f Albertz 1996:180-181; Rendtorff 2001:32), but there are also deliberate allusions to the fulfilment of the promises made to Abraham.³⁰ The adoption formula in 2 Samuel 7:14 has also been regarded as the covenant between Yahweh and David (see Sohn 1999:369, note 54).³¹ It seems to me that the form in which the text is couched also deliberately imitates, at least in part, the

²⁹ This employs similar terms to those of the circumcision covenant with Abraham: this covenant too was 'forever,' but individuals refusing to adhere to the rite would be 'cut off' (Gn 17).

³⁰ This of course entails the view that the Abrahamic covenant was in essence an earlier development than the Davidic covenant, and not, as for example Albertz (1997:421, 512 and elsewhere) believes, basically a construct of the exilic community.

³¹ Sohn (1999:369) continues to explain that in Ancient Near Eastern practice the vassal was apparently considered as the suzerain's adopted son. This argument would seem to support my following statement.

structures known from international treaties (and the Sinai covenant), which in my opinion is additional proof that a covenant is in view, even though the word $\text{tyr}\bar{\text{i}}\text{B}$] is not used in this chapter.³²

However, 2 Samuel 7 is only the starting point in considering the covenant between Yahweh and David. Other scriptures need to be consulted as well in order to get a more complete picture of what actually was entailed in this covenant.

2.4.3.2. 2 Samuel 23:1-7

In 2 Samuel 23:1-7 we have, according to the ancient author, the last words of David. He gives himself, apart from others, the title ‘the anointed of the God of Jacob’ ($\text{bqo}[\text{ }]\text{y}'' \text{yhel} \text{z}\bar{\text{a}}\bar{\text{O}} \text{j}'\text{yvim}$]) through whom the spirit of Yahweh has spoken. The MT of verses 45 is very concise and difficult to translate as is obvious from the different renderings offered by English versions, in particular NIV and NKJV. The latter seems to imply that David feels unworthy of, yet grateful for, the everlasting covenant ($\mu\bar{\text{l}} ; / [\text{tyr}\bar{\text{i}}\text{B}]$)³³ that Yahweh has made ($\mu\bar{\text{c}} ;$) with him. NIV on the other hand renders the whole of verse 5 as a series of rhetorical questions demanding the answer ‘yes’. The point of the text is clear though: the everlasting covenant that Yahweh made with David is well arranged and secure ($\text{hr} ; \text{muv}] \text{W} \text{lKob}' \text{hk} ; \text{Wr} [\text{ }]$). The precise content and nature of this $\mu\bar{\text{l}} ; / [\text{tyr}\bar{\text{i}}\text{B}]$ are however not explicitly stated, neither conditions nor benefits are mentioned. However, verse 3 notes that the king must reign righteously and in the fear of the God (NKJV). I also think that $\mu\bar{\text{l}} ; / [\text{tyr}\bar{\text{i}}\text{B}]$ alludes to the deliberate and repeated use of the phrase $\mu\bar{\text{l}} ; / [\text{Ad} [']$ in 2 Samuel 7 and hints at the enduring dynasty that Yahweh promised. ‘David’s house, kingdom and throne had been declared sure for ever in *an everlasting covenant, as ordered and secure* as a legal document, because it depends on the word of the Lord, which cannot prove false’ (Baldwin 1988:292, emphasis hers).

2.4.3.3. Psalm 89

Psalm 89 divides into 3 sections (verses 1-18, 19-37 and 38-51, with verse 52 as an appendix to the whole third book of the Psalter),³⁴ but *Gattung* and date are disputed in scholarly circles (cf Anderson AA 1981:631). It is difficult to make a decision regarding these issues, but since I am

³² Kruse (1985:149) suggests that the Deuteronomist did not use the word $\text{tyr}\bar{\text{i}}\text{B}$] in this context because he did not want to ‘cast any shadow on his all-dominating idea of the Sinai-Covenant. There must be but one covenant with God, as there must be but one cultic centre.’ On the relationship between Davidic and Sinai covenants see below.

³³ Some scholars would translate the word $\mu\bar{\text{l}} ; / [$ in this context as a divine epithet and render the phrase ‘Has not the Eternal made a covenant with me?’ However, I think that Youngblood (on 2 Sm 23:5) is right in observing that the phrase $\mu\bar{\text{l}} ; / [\text{tyr}\bar{\text{i}}\text{B}]$ is rather too frequent as a *terminus technicus* in the Old Testament, and that in the context of 2 Sm 23 it is more likely to be rendered ‘eternal covenant’, in particular since there seem to be obvious allusions to 2 Sm 7 and the phraseology there ($\mu\bar{\text{l}} ; / [\text{Ad} [']$).

³⁴ VanGeren (1989-98 on Ps 89; see also Anderson AA 1981:630) divides it up as follows: 1-18 A Hymn of Yahweh’s Kingship, 19-37 The Covenant with David, 38-51 A Lament. The covenant with David is mentioned in the first two sections.

inclined to take the Psalm as a unity, the content of verses 38-51 seems to indicate a date in the early exile, using material from older traditions (especially for verses 19-37). The word **tyriB]** and the theme of the Davidic covenant occurs in all three sections and, as Bright (1977:59) rightly observes, 'is the thread that binds them together.'

In the first section, in verse 3 (Hebrew verse 4), Yahweh speaks of the covenant he has made with his chosen one (**yriyjib]li tyriB] yTir'K**) and the oath he has sworn to his servant David (**dwId;l] yTi[]B'v]nI yDib][')**. The word(s) 'I swore' are parallel to 'my covenant', and so it is clear that the covenant entailed an oath by Yahweh, a solemn promise that Yahweh undertook to fulfil. The content of this oath is then outlined in the following verse: to 'establish' David's seed (**ò[,r]z¾ ÷ykia;**) and to 'build' his throne (**òa}s]Ki ... ytiynIb;W**) forever (**æ/dw:Ardol], µl;/[Ad[')**. 'Seed' and 'throne' are again parallel, and refer to the dynasty. The language used is very similar to that in 2 Samuel 7, in particular the reference to the 'building' of David's throne (instead of David building Yahweh's house), and the eternal nature of the covenant.

This first reference to the Davidic covenant is then amplified in the second section, in verses 19-37 (Hebrew 20-38). The precise relationship between this part of the Psalm and 2 Samuel 7 is not clear. One may be dependent on the other, but it is more likely that both texts go back to a common source,³⁵ while in their present form they represent 'the end products of a process of successive elaboration of the original dynastic oracle' (Anderson AA 1981:639). The word **tyriB]** occurs in verses 28 (Hebrew 29) and 34 (Hebrew 35). Verses 19-27 outline the content of the promises to David, in other words, Yahweh's obligations towards him. In language very similar to 2 Samuel 7, Yahweh promises David the defeat of his enemies (especially verses 22-23 (Hebrew 23-24), c f 2 Sm 7:10), extensive rule (verse 25, 27 (Hebrew 26, 28); however, exact borders are not mentioned) and a special relationship between himself and the king (verse 26 (Hebrew 27), c f 2 Sm 7:14). This last promise is a variation of the sonship formula also used in Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 9:5. As a climax to what has so far preceded, verses 28-29 (Hebrew 29-30) state the eternal nature of the mercies and covenant of God (c f 2 Sm 7:13, 16). 'Forever' (**µl;/[l]**) is in an emphatic position, and the word is amplified three times in these two verses with synonymous or near synonymous terms: **tn<m, aôn<, d['l; µyIm;v; ymeyKi**. God will faithfully keep his covenant (**ytyriB]**) and his covenant mercies (**yDis]j ')**, and David's descendants (or seed, **/ [r] z¾**) and throne will never end.

In verses 30-32 (Hebrew 31-33) however, there are important modifications to these seemingly unconditional promises. While God's pledge to the dynasty in general still stands, individual kings might forfeit the benefit of these promises by their own unfaithfulness. In other words, the promises would only be effective for the individual members of the dynasty if they adhered to the

³⁵ Koch (1995:84) thinks of a common oral source.

law (ytir;/T), judgements (yf'P;v]mi), statutes (yt'Qo]u) and commandments (yt'/x]mi) of Yahweh. Undoubtedly, these terms refer to the Sinai covenant.³⁶ It is interesting to note that in the same way as with the covenant of circumcision, each king was individually responsible for keeping these commandments. As Cross (1973:236) astutely comments (though in a different context): 'That a covenant be described as "perpetual" need not mean necessarily that it is unconditional.' The covenant with Abraham was also established 'forever' (Gn 17, especially verse 19), but any individual not performing circumcision would be 'cut off'. In Psalm 89, the kings who did not keep God's laws but forsook them and therefore profaned God's statutes would be 'punished with the rod' (μ[;v]Pi fb,veb] yTid]q'p;W) and their sins repaid with 'stripes' (μn:/[} μy[igÉnÒbiW). This of course is highly symbolic language, and it is not quite clear what exactly such punishment would in the end entail.

Verses 33-37 (Hebrew 34-38) basically make the same point as verses 28-29 (Hebrew 29-30). Despite necessary chastisement for individual kings, God's assures the dynasty of its everlasting status. Again very emphatic language is used to make the point. Yahweh will certainly not 'break' his covenant mercies or 'lie' about his faithfulness to David. Neither will he profane his covenant (ytiyriB] lLej'a}Aal; , even though the kings may have profaned God's laws), or change his mind about what he has promised. The connection between covenant and oath is again evident in the assurance that since Yahweh once swore to David, he will not become a liar (by changing it; verse 35 (Hebrew 36)). The content of this oath is the eternal nature of the Davidic descendants and his throne (verses 36-37 (Hebrew 37-38)), again expressed in very emphatic terms by its very repetitiveness and terse imagery (μl;/[l], vm,V,k', j'rey:K], ÷m;aÔn< qj'V'B' d[ewÒ).

Perhaps the main reason for bracketing verses 30-33 with these emphatic assurances of God's faithfulness to his covenant with David is the experience then expressed in the remainder of the Psalm, where the Psalmist complains of the very thing he thought God would never do, namely the (perceived) breach of this covenant. Especially verses 38-39 seem to reflect a time in the nation's history (perhaps after the fall of Jerusalem to Babylon in 587/6 BC and the end of the Davidic reign?), where all these promises of the everlasting dynasty seem to have become invalid. Why, so asks the Psalmist, if Yahweh promised an 'everlasting' dynasty to David is then everything falling to pieces? Why has God 'cast off and abhorred' (NKJV, sa;m]Tiw" T;j]n"zÉ) and been 'furious' with his anointed (òj,yvim]Aμ[i T;r]B' ['t]hi)? In the opinion of the Psalmist, Yahweh has 'renounced' the covenant of his servant òD,b][' tyriB] hT;r]a'nE), and 'profaned' (T;l]L'ji) his crown. In other words, the promise of an 'everlasting' covenant is no longer evident in the circumstances. In the remaining verses, the

³⁶ Here I differ from Albertz (1996:180), who explicitly states that in his opinion in Ps 89 the Davidic covenant has no connection with the Sinai covenant, despite its similar terminology, but is constituted because of the universal reign of the heavenly king (v 15 (English v. 14)).

Psalmist wrestles with this whole issue and questions Yahweh about it. Not only the Davidic dynasty seems to have vanished, but the promises about the land also have seemingly come to nothing (verses 40-41, Hebrew 41-42). It is interesting that the Psalm does not resolve the issue in a positive statement,³⁷ but it ends with a plea to Yahweh to remember the promises he once made to David and to regard the reproach presently faced by the Psalmist (and his community?) from his and Yahweh's enemies.

2.4.3.4. *Psalm 132*

Psalm 132 is one of the Psalms of Ascent. It celebrates the bringing of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, but though a pre-exilic date is probable (Anderson AA 1981:880), scholars question a dating as early as the tenth century as advocated, for example, by VanGemeren (1989-98 on Ps 132) in his introduction to this Psalm, whose stance I shall adopt here. The Psalm links the themes of the movement of the Ark from Kirjath Jearim to Jerusalem and the Davidic covenant, and may well have been used at a festive procession. For the purposes of this study, verses 11-12 are most significant.

In these two verses there is a reference to the Davidic covenant, which is Yahweh's answer to David's oath (ḥw:hy'l' [B'v]nI rv,a}, v 2) to find a place for the (Ark of the) Lord.³⁸ Yahweh promises to David, also with an oath (ḏwId;l] ḥw:hyōA[B'v]nI), that his descendants will certainly sit on his throne. However, unlike 2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 89, where there is a definite *unconditional* element to the promise, here in Psalm 132:12 it is couched in decidedly conditional language: only *if* David's sons will keep Yahweh's covenant (ytiyriB] òyn<b; Wrm]v]yIApai]) will he let their descendants sit on his throne forever (ḏ['Ayde[}). What is meant by tyriB] (which is paralleled to ytido[e]) is not explicitly stated, but one may assume that the reference is to the Sinai covenant regulations, and perhaps also to the rules for kings in Deuteronomy 17.³⁹ The promise of God to David is however not only to give him a dynasty (verses 11-12) but also, it seems, protection from his enemies (verse 18). All this is closely linked with Yahweh's choice of Zion: it is there that he will do all this for David (verses 13-17). The expressions 'I will make the horn of David grow' and 'I will prepare a lamp for My Anointed' (verse 17, NKJV) seem to imply the promise of a stable dynasty (c f also Anderson AA 1981:885). Thus I beg to differ from Cross (1973:233) in whose opinion the strongly conditional aspect of the Psalm is in agreement with the concept of kingship in the era of Saul and the later Northern Kingdom, which stands in sharp contrast to the Judaic notion of an

³⁷ Verse 52 (Hebrew 53) is a concluding statement for the third section of the Psalter. While it is right to observe that 'the doxology affirms the necessity to praise the Lord as an appropriate response to all the circumstances in life' (VanGemeren in his concluding remark on Ps 89:52), I do not think it resolves the problems raised in verses 38-51 (Hebrew 39-52).

³⁸ It is interesting to note that the word Yahweh is in this verse used for the 'Ark of the Lord'. It seems that the Ark is almost more than a mere symbol for the presence of Yahweh, though it is explicitly referred to in the following verses (6-9).

³⁹ This suggestion of course presumes that this text is earlier than Ps 132, which is a debatable point.

unconditional, eternal decree of kingship for the Davidic house.⁴⁰ Bright (1977:64) also argues that in the present form of the Psalm ‘the conditional element is somewhat blunted in that it is immediately followed by Yahweh’s...choice of Zion as his eternal abode (vs. 13-16) - and this carries with it no conditions.’

2.4.3.5. Evaluation

The scholarly debate concerning the Davidic covenant has basically centred on three issues, one of which I have not dealt with at all since it is not directly relevant for the purpose of this study. This is the issue of whether or not the prohibition on David building the temple was absolute or not. In other words, was there once a tradition which stated that there should never be a temple at all, or was it just a prohibition for David, who, for whatever reasons (since the ones given in 2 Sm 7 are often considered insufficient) was forbidden to construct one? Without going into further detail concerning this argument, I suggest that the prohibition was never absolute (but see for example Cross 1973:246 for a different stance).

The second issue in the debate concerns the conditionality or unconditionality of the Davidic covenant. The most important problem arising is the question *when* the *unconditional* aspect of the covenant entered into the equation, early in Israel’s history or late. That there is a strong conditional aspect to the Davidic covenant in Psalm 132 and 2 Samuel 23 is undisputed. In Cross’ opinion, the conditional elements of the covenant are original, and the unconditional ones added later by the Jerusalem court theologians to legitimise the Davidic dynasty. He comes to this conclusion by arguing for an early date for Psalm 132 (Cross 1973:232-234) and for a conditional element in 2 Samuel 23:1-7 (Cross 1973:234-237). In his opinion, the royal theologians at Solomon’s court were responsible for the unconditional aspects that gave way to the conditional ones of previous times (Cross 1973:238-239).

However, other scholars have more recently argued for the opposite to have been the case. For example, Patton (1995) believes that Psalm 132 is actually a late, post-exilic composition using earlier traditions and language, and that the unconditional elements of the covenant are therefore earlier. Kruse (1985:160) also thinks that the conditions in the Davidic covenant were added later and that ‘the original promise had no conditions attached.’ If one adopts this stance, then Cross’ argument can no longer hold.

In my view, there is no reason to assume that both the conditional and the unconditional aspect were not given at the same time, as 2 Samuel 7 describes. It is even today not unusual that people have ‘selective memories’ and propagate only those parts of a message that fit into their theology. Looking at the different references to the Davidic covenant in scriptures outside 2 Samuel 7, this is in my opinion exactly what happened. In some quarters, the unconditional aspect was considered more important and fitting into the theological framework, therefore that was propagated and

⁴⁰ On the other hand, he also considers this Psalm a product of the early cult in Jerusalem, whose ideology is incompatible with the later one of an eternal kingship promised to the house of David.

embellished. In other quarters warning voices made sure that the condition for the continuance of the dynasty, the obedience of the individual king, would not be overlooked. That the abrogation of the dynasty after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BCE caused problems for those Jews who held the former view, is also not surprising. This then led to the need for a synthesis of both views by the later theologians, and obviously resulted in a greater emphasis on the concept of a coming Messiah - or ideal king.

That in the conception of the people ideas of the inviolability of the Davidic dynasty, the temple, and indeed the whole nation had developed is clear from the prophetic polemic against them. They constantly had to fight this notion of the inviolability of the Temple and God's continued protection of the nation. However, there is also evidence that this perception of the inviolability of the king and the idea that he was beyond criticism (as Brueggemann 1997:606 seems to infer) was not absolute. The mere fact that the prophets took the liberty to prophesy to kings uninvited (c f 2 Sm 12:1-6; Is 7)⁴¹ would seem to indicate that at least individual kings were not considered sacrosanct and beyond critique. On the other hand, there must have been traditions that clearly established the duties of the nation towards Yahweh, otherwise the prophets could not have referred to them without further explanations in their scathing critique of the people's failure to adhere to them.

This leads to the third issue that warrants some further discussion, namely the relationship between the Davidic and the Sinai covenants. Some of the similarities between these two covenants have already been mentioned, for example the resemblance of the sonship formula to the covenant formula. Fensham (1982:242) points out that the promise of eternal reign is similar to the covenant blessings in Hittite vassal treaties. Rost (referred to by Gunneweg 1960:336) described the relationship between the Sinai and Davidic covenants as *lokale [s] Nebeneinander* (local co-existence). By this, he meant that the former tradition was passed on in the Northern Kingdom, while the latter existed in the South. However, Gunneweg (ibid) correctly points out that this is too narrow a viewpoint, and that the relationship must rather be seen in terms of an overlap of the two traditions. He rightly argues that the Sinai tradition is developed and continued in the Davidic covenant, in an attempt to keep abreast of the needs of the new situation that arose with the establishment of the monarchy (Gunneweg 1960:339). Fensham (1982:242) similarly observes that the Davidic covenant 'is not to be regarded as a new covenant, but as a further extension of the Sinai covenant.' Rendtorff (2001:32, quoting Waschke) writes that the promises of a dynasty for David "*zu einer Funktion und einem Aspekt des 'Israelbundes' geworden*" ist. "*David ist zu einem prononcierten Spezialfall Israels geworden.*"

⁴¹ As far as Judah is concerned, where the tradition of the inviolability of the dynasty and Zion arose, Nathan and Isaiah went to David and Ahaz respectively without having been invited to do so. In the Northern Kingdom we hear for example of the man of God prophesying in the presence of Jeroboam about the altar at Bethel (1 Ki 13:1-3) and Elijah prophesying to Ahab (1 Ki 17:1, 21:20). In all these scriptures, it is explicitly stated that a prophet went to the king in question. In instances which simply read: 'And the Lord spoke to [Solomon; or Jehu etc]' (1 Ki 11:11, 2 Ki 10:31) this may well have happened through the agency of a prophet, but this is not explicitly stated. On the other hand, the kings were supposed to have a personal relationship to Yahweh, and he probably communicated to them directly.

Krasovec makes some striking observations with regard to the connection between the Sinai and Davidic covenants. Firstly, he notes that ‘both the Sinaitic and Davidic covenants are in principle conditional and unconditional, but not in the same sense....the Sinaitic covenant is ultimately unconditional despite its conditionality, while the Davidic covenant is unconditional by definition’ (Krasovec 1996:68). Although I have reservations about the statement that the Davidic covenant is unconditional *by definition* (he himself argues slightly differently at 67), these are valid points.

Krasovec (1995:66) also mentions the fact that the Davidic covenant was not based on David’s loyalty to God and thus a reward for it, but on the ‘unreservedness of God’s commitment to the creation as a whole’. However, for unfaithful members of the dynasty there was still the threat of punishment. He rightly argues that ‘[t]his threat must be taken just as seriously as that made in the context of the Sinaitic covenant’ (Krasovec 1995:67). Punishment in the Bible is, however, not just for the sake of punishment, but to bring the offender to a realisation of what he has done and ultimately back into a relationship with Yahweh. This is true not only for individuals, but also for the nation as a whole (see e.g. Lv 26:40-45; Am 4:6-11). The goal of the threat is ‘not destruction ...but inducement to faithfulness or repentance’ (Krasovec 1995:67). Thus, the Davidic and Sinai covenants ‘converge in two important points: first, their terms include the possibility that individual links in the chain can be rejected; and secondly, they provide grounds for hope that after punishment there will be a new beginning’ (Krasovec 1995:69). As I have remarked elsewhere, the covenant relationship (even of the Sinai covenant) ‘can be severely impaired, even abrogated (for a time), while the *covenant itself* remains valid’ (Linington 2003b:66, emphasis added).

To sum up, the covenants with Abraham and David and the Sinai covenant are intricately related, in that each of the latter two is an outgrowth and indeed fulfilment of the first.⁴² That the emphasis in the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants is on God’s promise, while in the Sinai covenant it is on Israel’s response to God’s promise does not detract from this. Both the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants demanded obedience of the recipient in response to the offer, as did the Sinai covenant, and pronounced punishment on individual offenders. On the other hand, the Sinai covenant was based in the first place on God’s gracious commitment to his people. He offered Israel the covenant because he loved them (Dt 7:7-8) and because of his previous commitment to the patriarchs (Ex 2:24-25), not because they had done anything for him that deserved it. The covenant with Israel was not merely a legal agreement, but a covenant of love by which Yahweh bound Israel to himself, as McKenzie (1946:322) has ably demonstrated. In other words, the Sinai covenant was unconditional in the sense that God bound himself to Israel first. However, God expected Israel also to show her love to him by keeping the commandments that he gave them. But, ‘[t]he rise and fall of Israel’s fortunes were not an index of the affection of *Yahweh for his people*, but of *their affection for him*’ (McKenzie 1946:325, emphasis added).

⁴² Fensham (1967:314) also notes that ‘the covenant of David is not to be taken as quite a new covenant without connection to or in opposition against the covenant of Sinai. It should be regarded as complementary to the ancient covenant.’

2.5. *tyrīb]* in the books of Kings

The beginning of the books of Kings describes the history of Solomon as successor of David, both in physical and spiritual terms. Solomon is the first of whom the Bible reports that he ‘walked in the statutes of his father David’ (1 Ki 3:3 NKJV). But later the same biblical writer notes that Solomon ‘did evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not fully follow the Lord as did his father David’ (1 Ki 11:6 NKJV) after Solomon gave permission to build sanctuaries for other gods in Jerusalem to please his wives.

2.5.1. 1 Kings 5: Treaty between Solomon and Hiram of Tyre

The first mention of the word *tyrīb]* in 1 Kings concerns a treaty between Solomon and Hiram, the king of Tyre. There are reminiscences of the Davidic covenant in verses 3-5 (Hebrew v 17-19), where Solomon explains that his father David could not build a house for Yahweh because of the wars he led. However, since Yahweh had given him rest (*ǰ' ynIhe* - the same root word is used in 2 Sm 7:11) on every side, he was now able to go ahead with executing this building project, in fulfilment of the promise to David in 2 Samuel 7:13 (1 Ki 5:5 - Hebrew v 19). Thus, Solomon enlists Hiram’s help in doing so by asking him to provide the building materials needed, while he, Solomon, would pay him what he wanted. Hiram agrees to the proposal, and asks for provisions for his household in return (1 Ki 5:9 - Hebrew v 23).

Whether this was a parity or a vassal treaty can be debated. Provan (1995:64), rightly I think, points out that despite Hiram’s suggestion that his workers should bring the timber to be used for the temple from Tyre to the coast of Judah (1 Ki 5:9 - Hebrew v 23), Solomon nevertheless sent his own workers to assist him (1 Ki 5:13-14 - Hebrew vv 27-28). In other words, while Solomon was willing to enter into negotiations, he could in the end do as he pleased. This would point to a suzerain-vassal relationship between Solomon and Hiram, with Solomon as the suzerain and Hiram the vassal, rather than a parity treaty. On the other hand, the wording in 1 Ki 5:12 (Hebrew 26, *ǰh, ynEv] tyrīb] Wtr]k]YIw*) does not indicate a suzerain-vassal relationship, but rather one between equals. Also, both kings promised to provide for the other whatever they needed. Whichever view is taken, since a relationship between two human partners is described, I think the word *tyrīb]* in verse 12 is appropriately translated either ‘treaty’ (NIV, NKJV), ‘alliance’ (NEB) or even ‘league’ (AV).

2.5.2. 1 Kings 6-8: The Temple built and dedicated

In chapter 6:12-13 there is a reference to the Davidic covenant, without however mentioning the word *tyrīb]*. The Lord speaks to Solomon and admonishes him to ‘walk in My statutes, execute My judgments, keep all My commandments, and walk in them.’ If he does so, Yahweh will perform his word to Solomon and dwell among the children of Israel and not forsake them. Similar words are used in Ps 89:30-31 (Hebrew 31-32), though there the reference is negative: if

the king forsakes the law, and does not walk in God's judgments or if he breaks his statutes and does not keep the commandments, God will punish him.

The word tyriB] occurs in the phrase 'Ark of the Covenant of the Lord' ($\text{hw:hy}\bar{\text{O}}$ tyriB] \div/ra) in 1 Kings 6:19. This verse, set in the section describing in detail the building of the temple complex, outlines the preparation of the inner sanctuary of the temple where the ark would be housed.

In chapter 8, the temple is completed, and Solomon proceeds with great celebrations to dedicate it to Yahweh. One part of the Davidic covenant is fulfilled: a place is ready for the ark. The Holy of Holies contains nothing but the ark, and the ark contains nothing but the 'two tablets of stone which Moses put there at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant (Hebrew simply $\text{hw:hy}\bar{\text{O}}$ $\text{tr}'\text{K}; \text{rv}, \text{a}$) with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt' (1 Ki 8:9, NKJV). The word tyriB] does not occur in this verse, but it is clearly implied. In addition, it gives testimony to the fact that the word trk had acquired the technical meaning 'make a covenant' by the time this text was written. What is however interesting is the covenant that is being referred to in this verse and in verse 21, where the word tyriB] does in fact occur. There, Solomon says, 'I have made a place for the ark, *in which is the covenant of the Lord which He made with our fathers*, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt' (NKJV, emphasis mine). The Hebrew for the italicised words reads Wnyteboa } $\text{A}\mu[\text{i tr}'\text{K}; \text{rv}, \text{a}]$ $\text{hw:hy}\bar{\text{O}}$ tyriB] $\mu\text{v}; \text{Arv}, \text{a}$ }. Clearly, the reference is to the Sinai covenant, perhaps in particular the stipulations laid out on the tablets with the Ten Commandments.

The other occurrence of the word tyriB] in 1 Kings 8 is more difficult to assess in terms of what covenant it refers to. In verse 23, Solomon prays to the Lord, 'Lord God of Israel, there is no God in heaven above or on earth below like You, *who keep Your covenant and mercy with Your servants who walk before You with all their hearts*' (NKJV, emphasis added). Since Solomon continues to refer to the fulfilment of Yahweh's promises to David, it seems that the words $\mu\text{B}; \text{liAlk}; \text{B}] \bar{\text{O}}\text{yn}<\text{p}; \text{l}] \mu\text{y}\text{ki}\text{l}] \text{hoh}' \bar{\text{O}}\text{yd}, \text{b}; [\text{ } \text{l}' \text{ds}, \text{j}, \text{h}' \text{w}\bar{\text{O}}$ $\text{tyriB}] \text{h}' \text{rmevo}$ do indeed refer to David's faithfulness. Or do they? The words are the same as those used in Deuteronomy 7:9, except for the addressee ($\text{wyb}; \text{h}] \text{aol}] \text{ds}, \text{j}, \text{h}' \text{w}\bar{\text{O}}$ $\text{tyriB}] \text{h}' \text{rmevo}$), and they are also reminiscent of the second commandment ('showing mercy to thousands, to those who love me' Ex 20:6, Dt 5:10). Because of this, I think that the reference of tyriB] in this context should not be restricted to the Davidic covenant alone, though this is the primary reference point, but it also extends to the commandments and stipulations of the Sinai covenant. I also believe that the mention of the 'covenant of the Lord' which was in the Ark (verse 21) and which explicitly refers to the ancient Sinai covenant, gives additional support to this suggestion.

However, the word ‘statutes’ in verse 11 is in the plural (ʔṯ ' Qoʔu), not the singular,⁴³ so more than one commandment and statute must have been infringed by Solomon. Moreover, nowhere in 2 Samuel 7 and other references to the Davidic covenant are any ‘commandments’ or ‘statutes’ explicitly listed. It is therefore clear that the *tyriB]* in verse 11 refers to the stipulations and commandments of the Sinai covenant in general, but perhaps also more specifically to the explicit rules for kings in Deuteronomy 17:14-20.⁴⁴

2.5.4. 1 Kings 15: Asa and Ben-Hadad

As is the case with all the kings of Judah, Asa is in 1 Kings 15:11 compared to ‘his father David’, in this case in a favourable manner. He did ‘what was right in the eyes of the Lord, as did his father David’ (NKJV). In the later years of his reign, during a war with the Northern Kingdom, he bribed (1 Ki 15:19: *bh; zÉwÒ ¹s, K, dj'vo òl] yTij]l'v; hNEhi*) king Ben-Hadad of Syria, so that he would break his treaty with the Baasha of Israel (*laer;c]yIAJl,m, av;[]B'Ata, òt]yriB]Ata, hr;peh;*) and make an alliance (*tyriB]*) with Asa instead. Thiel (1970:214-15) observes that this text is the oldest witness to the phrase *tyriB] rpehe*. In the context of 1 Kings 15:19 the word *tyriB]* obviously refers to a non-aggression alliance between the two Kingdoms of Syria and Judah, while the phrase *tyriB] rpehe* has its *Sitz im Leben* in ancient Near Eastern treaty law, where it seemed to refer particularly to the unilateral revoking of a treaty. This, according to Thiel (1970:215), was the origin for the later use of the formula in theological contexts, where *tyriB]* refers not to a treaty between nations, but to the covenant between Yahweh and Israel.

2.5.5. 1 Kings 19: Elijah on Mount Horeb

After the contest with the Baal prophets on Mt Carmel in chapter 18, Elijah was obliged to flee for his life from Jezebel, who had set a price on his head. Once he reached Mt Horeb, he had an encounter with Yahweh, who twice asks him the question ‘What are you doing here, Elijah?’ (verse 9 and 13; NKJV), and each time Elijah gives the same answer: ‘I have been very zealous (*ytiaNEqi aNæq'*) for the Lord God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant (*òt]yriB] WbzÕ[;*), torn down Your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword...’ (verses 10 and 14, NKJV).

⁴³ The word *tyriB]* never occurs in the plural. It is obviously used in a collective sense here.

⁴⁴ Solomon of course did not adhere to these commandments: he had many wives, great riches, introduced a professional army with chariots, and there is no direct reference to him ‘reading the law all the days of his life’. Because of this, it has been argued that the rules laid down in Dt 17:14-20 were the result of the abuses by the Israelite kings. However, this need not necessarily be so. I agree with C J H Wright (1996:211) who observes that ‘it is not necessary to assume that this law of kingship must be a post factum reflection of Solomon. The nature of ancient Near Eastern monarchies was common knowledge, and Israel...had plenty of dealings with nations headed by kings....Any leader...in Israel had enough knowledge of what kings *could* be like to know what a king in Israel *should not* be like...or...to warn Israel about what a king *would* eventually be like...’ (emphasis his).

In the context, tyriB] obviously refers to the Sinai covenant, and is therefore aptly translated ‘covenant’. Unlike Elijah, who had been zealous for Yahweh, and therefore by implication for his covenant, the Israelites had abandoned it. They showed their disregard for the covenant by tearing down Yahweh’s altars (and building ones for other gods?) and murdering his prophets. In other words, they disregarded both the means for reconciliation with God and his messengers who would keep them in his ways. The word bz] is one of the most frequent words used to refer to act of breaking the covenant, and so synonymous with rrp (according to Alden 1997:365). It is interesting that Yahweh does not entertain Elijah’s complaint, as he had expected, with immediate action in punishment on the covenant-breaking nation. The fact that Yahweh was neither in the wind, nor in the earthquake or the fire, all symbols for judgement, but in the ‘still small voice,’ seems to indicate that the time for judgement was not yet ripe. In contrast, Amos would later see the vision of the basket of ripe fruit (Am 8:1-2), symbolising the end of the nation.

2.5.6. 1 Kings 20: Ahab and Ben Hadad

In 1 Kings 20 we are told of a war between Israel and Syria, in which Israel gained the victory. The Syrian king, Ben Hadad, surrendered and asked for terms of peace. In verse 34, Ben Hadad apparently agrees to the terms for a peace agreement (tyriB): restoration of cities taken by his father to Israel and the granting of favourable trade conditions⁴⁵ for Ahab. In this case, the tyriB] is unquestionably a treaty, and the word is rightly translated ‘treaty’ (NKJV, NIV) or ‘peace agreement’ (New Century Version), while AV and the American Standard Version retain the word ‘covenant’.

2.5.7. 2 Kings 11: Joash

In 2 Kings 11 the grim story is told of how queen Athaliah killed all the heirs (so she thought) to the Judean throne to become queen herself. However, Joash escaped death and was hidden by his nurse (or aunt) for six years. Then, in the seventh year, Jehoiada took action by bringing military leaders to the temple and making a covenant with them (tyriB] $\mu\text{h}, \text{l}; \text{trok} \text{YIw}$ ") and taking an oath from them ($\mu\text{t}; \text{ao}$] $[\text{B}'\text{v}] \text{Y}''\text{w}$ "). The context of this verse suggests that the tyriB] referred to is simply an agreement (NEB), or pact (REB had ‘compact), confirmed by oath, with which the ‘bodyguards’ and ‘escorts’ (NKJV) bound themselves to be loyal to the king and Jehoiada himself. The content of the compact was that the officers would guard the king’s house and the temple, and protect the king with their lives when he appeared in public (verses 5-8).

Joash was duly crowned king, and Athaliah killed (1 Kings 11:12, 16). In 1 Kings 11:17, Jehoiada then ‘made a covenant (tyriB] $\text{h}'\text{Ata}$, $[\text{d}; \text{y}:/\text{hy}\ddot{\text{O}} \text{trok} \text{YIw}$ ") between the

⁴⁵ Ahab was granted permission to set up ‘marketplaces’ (t/xWj). According to Wiseman (1993:179) it was common practice in the Ancient Near East to stimulate inter-state trade and finance through merchant groups.

Lord, the king and the people (אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה, מֶלֶךְנוּ וְעַמֵּנוּ הַזֶּה (אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה, מֶלֶךְנוּ וְעַמֵּנוּ הַזֶּה), that they should be the Lord's people (אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה, מֶלֶךְנוּ וְעַמֵּנוּ הַזֶּה), and also between the king and the people (אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה, מֶלֶךְנוּ וְעַמֵּנוּ הַזֶּה) (NKJV). There is a clear reference to the covenant formula, though only one part of it is used. This would seem to indicate a reference to a renewal of the Sinai covenant, though it is not explicitly mentioned. The result of this **tyriB**] was that the people then went and tore down the Baal temple and killed the Baal priest, while Jehoiada appointed officers to take charge of the temple, and Joash took the throne publicly (verses 18-19). In other words, the content of the **tyriB**] was a recommitment of the people to Yahweh and a turning away from their idolatrous worship.

It is interesting that it is Jehoiada who makes the covenant 'between' Yahweh, the king and the people. This is one of the few instances where **tyriB**] is coupled with **÷ybe**, and it would appear that the word indicates Jehoiada as the mediator or facilitator of the covenant in this context. This may be further evidence that the **tyriB**] concluded was a renewal of the Sinai covenant. However, Smend (1963:9) thinks that this is the only place where the covenant formula does not refer either back to Moses or to future promises. Nevertheless, while there is no explicit mention of the Sinai covenant, I think that the subsequent action of the people in removing idolatrous features from their midst indicates at least a connection with the first commandment, if not a direct reference to such instructions as Leviticus 20:37 or Deuteronomy 13:12-18.

Rendtorff (1995b:35) points out that apart from Deuteronomy 26:18, this is the only place in the Hebrew Bible where the people are the ones who bind themselves to 'be the Lord's people.' In all other occurrences of the covenant formula it is Yahweh who makes this statement. The importance of the wording must also be commented on: This is the only verse outside the Pentateuch where the construction **÷yhl]li** is used. Usually this phrase indicates the consequence of Yahweh's gracious dealings with Israel (Rendtorff 1995b:68), but here it is the people who accept an obligation to be Yahweh's people again. Smend (1963:9) astutely observes that the phraseology of 2 Kings 11:17 is strange in that the people proclaim that they are God's people at a time when they already were the people of Yahweh for a long time. He writes: *'Ein Bundesschluß dieser Art, nach einer tiefgreifenden Zerstörung des Verhältnisses zwischen Gott und Volk, wurde offenbar als Neukonstituierung dieses Verhältnisses empfunden.'*

2.5.8. 2 Kings 13: God's gracious acts towards Israel

In 2 Kings 13:23 we find a reference to the covenant in the context of a general oppression of Israel by Syria. The context of chapter 13 is a series of wars between Israel and Syria, in which Israel was the loser on most, but not all occasions. In verse 22 we are informed that the Syrians oppressed Israel during the whole of Jehoahaz' reign. In verse 23, the author of Kings comments that despite this enemy oppression 'the LORD was gracious to [Israel] and had compassion and showed concern for them because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (/ **tyriB**]

÷['m' l] bqo[}y"wō qj;x]yI μh;r;b]a'Ata,). To this day (hT; [;Ad[') he has been unwilling to destroy them or banish them from his presence' (NIV).

Several features in this verse deserve comment. The reference is to the covenant with the ancestors rather than the Sinai or the Davidic covenant. Given that the Northern Kingdom is being addressed, which never accepted the dynastic claims of the house of David, it is not surprising that the Davidic covenant is not mentioned. However, Provan (1995:229)⁴⁶ notes that this is the first time in Kings that the conditional aspect of God's promises to the Northern Kingdom were matched with an unconditional assurance that Yahweh had been 'unwilling to destroy them or banish them from his presence' 'to this day'. This assurance could not have been made in this way with reference to the Sinai covenant. But the covenant with the forefathers was also unconditional and eternal. In fact, the writer of Kings puts the promise to the fathers on a par with that to David by noting that God was not willing to destroy Israel for the sake of the fathers (μτ; yjiv]h' hb;a; alζ, 2 Ki 13:23); neither was he willing to destroy Judah for the sake of David (tyjiv]h' l] hw:hyō hb;a; Aalζwō dwID; ÷['m' l] hd; WhyōAta, , 2 Ki 8:19). In other words, God was going to deal with Israel in the same way as he dealt with Judah. There was hope for both nations, because of the previous promises God had made to their forefathers. 'Grace will triumph over law in the end' (Provan 1995:230).

A last point that may be raised is the similarity of this verse with Exodus 2:24-25, where God heard Israel's groaning under the yoke of the Egyptians and 'remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.' The covenant at Sinai, after the deliverance of the people from Egypt, was thus not just a new covenant for Israel, but in fact a continuation of the covenant with the forefathers, albeit now with conditions added that the people had to fulfil. Similarly, the Davidic covenant refers back to the covenant with the forefathers, and also has similarities with the Sinai covenant. Therefore, it is perhaps less surprising than Provan admits that the writer of kings makes reference to God's promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

2.5.9. 2 Kings 17-18: Reasons for the fall of the Northern Kingdom

In 1 Kings 17 the deuteronomic writer tries to come to grips with the reasons for the fall of the Northern Kingdom (verses 5-23), and also with the continued split between the North and South (verses 24-41). Of course, hints have been given all along in the course of his story that it was due to the people's apostasy from Yahweh that all this happened. However, here he gives a detailed theological treatment of these reasons, which all boil down to two points: Israel has forsaken the covenant that Yahweh had made with their fathers (1 Ki 17:15), and the continuation of the separation of the two parts of the kingdoms is due to the continued idolatrous practices of the new inhabitants of what used to be the Northern Kingdom (1 Ki 17:34-35).

⁴⁶ The following remarks are also relying on Provan's observations.

The meaning of *tyriB*] in verse 15 is clarified by the context in which it occurs. Obviously, reference is being made to the Sinai covenant, as is evidenced in the different words used to describe the covenant (*wyQ;ju, /tyriB, wyt;/d*][e). The particular commandment that the Israelites have broken is the prohibition of the worship of any other god besides Yahweh. The Israelites rejected God's statutes (*wyQ;juAta, Wsa}m]YIw"*) as well as the covenant that he had made with their fathers (*(ut;/ba}Ata, tr'K; rv,a} /tyriB]Ata, wō*) and the testimonies with which he testified against them (*(uB; dy[ihe rv,a} wyt;/d]][e taewō*). The word 'fathers' is ambiguous. It may refer either to the Patriarchs or to the people's ancestors who concluded the Sinai covenant. In fact, maybe the ambiguity is deliberate and actually both are in mind.

The two references to *tyriB*] in the last section of the chapter, in verses 35 and 38, have similar connotations. In both instances there is a direct connection to the prohibition against worship of other gods. In verse 34, there is a similar accumulation of words describing the commandments of the covenant at Sinai as that in verse 15: *hw:x]Mik'wō hr;/Tk'wō μf;P;v]mik]W ut;QojuK]*. The inhabitants of the Northern Kingdom followed none of these, although they seem to be considered descendants of Jacob (later renamed Israel) by the writer, with whom Yahweh had made a covenant (*(tyriB] μT;ai hw:hyō trok]YIw"*). Obviously, Jacob (or Israel) is here used as a collective term describing the nation. The *tyriB*] in this verse is the Sinai covenant, as the elaboration in the following verse indicates. This is the *tyriB*] that the Israelites were not supposed to forget (*WjK;v]ti al; ,* verse 38), by fearing other gods.

In chapter 18:11-12, there is another reference to the exile of the Northern Kingdom, whose destiny under king Hoshea is contrasted with that of faithful Hezekiah of Judah. The reason for the exile is that 'they did not obey the voice of the Lord their God (*(uh, yhel;ã hw:hyō l/qB] W[m]v;Aal; ,* but transgressed his covenant (*(/tyriB]Ata, Wr̄b] ['Y"w"*) and all that Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded; and they would neither hear nor do them' (NKJV).

In all these instances in 2 Kings 17 and 18, the covenant was something that was commanded (*(hW:xí)*) and needed to be obeyed. In other words, the *obligations* laid upon Israel at Mt Sinai are in view. The Israelites had committed treason by abandoning the exclusive worship of Yahweh according to the *tyriB*] they had initially entered. Thus, they had rejected (*Wsa}m]YIw"*) their part of the deal and transgressed (*Wr̄b] ['Y"w"*) the commandments they had promised to keep, and as a consequence suffered the (implied) covenant curses.

2.5.10. 2 Kings 22-23: Josiah's covenant

After a long period of apostasy from Yahweh, Judah's last good king, Josiah, inherited the throne at the age of eight. As he came of age, religious reforms were started, during which 'the Book of the Law' (2 Ki 22:8: *hri /Th' rp, se*) or 'the Book of the Covenant' (2 Ki 23:2, 21: *tyriB]h' rp, se*) was found in the temple. The precise nature of this 'Book of the Covenant' has been a matter of long-standing debate. I think that Albertz (1996:309) is right in stating that the authors of 2 Kings took it to be Deuteronomy, though which form it had at that time is not certain, and the discussion concerning its identity need not be repeated here. Provan (1995:271) makes some interesting observations in noting that it had obviously been hidden (or out of use, at least) for some time, but how long is another open question. Solomon, Amaziah and Hezekiah are all commended by the authors of Kings for having kept it. One may of course argue that these commendations are anachronisms, but I think Provan's suggestions are probable.

According to the biblical record, Josiah, after hearing the content of the Book of the Covenant, sent to the prophetess Huldah to enquire of the Lord concerning the consequences of what he had heard. He was told that indeed, judgement would fall on the nation because of their idolatry and apostasy, but only after Josiah's death. Josiah was undeterred and continued to call all the elders of the nation to gather in Jerusalem, together with all the people.

In a ceremony reminiscent of the covenant renewal at Shechem (Joshua 24) and the dedication of the Temple under Solomon (1 Kings 8), Josiah proceeded to read to the people from the Book of the Covenant. Widengren (1957:3) rightly mentions the central significance of the role of the king in this covenant (renewal) ceremony. It was he who called the assembly, he apparently led the people (in procession?) to the Temple, and he read from the book of the law, the basis for the covenant, to the people. It was also the king who made the covenant before Yahweh, thus exercising the duties of a High Priest (Widengren 1957:3) and covenant mediator (Patterson 1989 on 1 Ki 23:1-3). The ceremony was obviously a renewal of the Sinai covenant, a ceremony that seems to have taken place at certain intervals (usually a seven-year period, cf Dt 31:10-13). Widengren (1957) convincingly argues that such a celebration was usually presided over either by the king (after the establishment of the monarchy) or by the leader of the nation (Joshua). He also points out similarities of procedure in the ceremonies usually considered covenant renewals: Joshua 24, 2 Kings 11 and 23, and I think he is right to include 1 Kings 8 and Solomon's dedication of the temple as well.⁴⁷

The wording of verse 3 is interesting. It implies that the king first, perhaps for himself alone, made the covenant 'before the Lord' (*hw:hyò ynEp]li tyriB]h'Ata, trok]YIw*). The content of this *tyriB]* was to 'follow the Lord (*hw:hyò rj'a'*

⁴⁷ However, the celebration in 1 Kings 8 was not a renewal after the apostasy of the nation, as is the case in the other covenant renewal ceremonies which are reported in Kings and Chronicles. One might more appropriately term the celebration in 1 Kings 8 a re-dedication of the people to Yahweh, when the temple was dedicated for the first time.

tk,l,l;) and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes (wyt;QojuAta,wō wyt;/d][eAta,wō wyt;/x]mi rmov]liwō) with all his heart and all his soul (bleAlk;B] vp,n<Alk;b]W), to perform (uyqih;l]) all the words of this covenant...⁴⁸ (NKJV, italics theirs to indicate the words are not in the Hebrew). The king therefore made a solemn promise to keep the commandments he had just read out to the people. I think that the word used for 'perform', uyqih;l], is interesting in the context. Usually in contexts where it is used with the word tyriB], it is Yahweh who speaks of establishing or performing his promises towards the person addressed. The only other case where uyqihe is used in connection with a man keeping a commandment, (1 Sm 15:11, 13) it is used with rb;D;. In that context, Yahweh regrets that he made Saul king, for he did not perform (uyqihe) his 'word'. It would seem, therefore, that the significance of the word in 2 Kings 23:3 is to highlight the seriousness and determination with which Josiah enters into the covenant, imitating Yahweh's faithfulness. How serious he is in this is evident from the measures to purge public worship in the following section.

With the king thus being the trailblazer, so to speak, the people followed suit and also 'took a stand for the covenant' (tyriB]B' μ[;h;AlK; dmo[}Y"w"), another unusual expression which, as far as I can ascertain, occurs only in this verse (and the parallel in 2 Chronicles 34:32, which is however slightly different in wording; see comment on this below). The interpretation given to the expression in the NKJV (and other English versions) is probably the correct one. But perhaps there is more to the choice of words used, and the significance of the word dmo[}Y"w" is only shown in the following text. I think it is striking that the measures taken to purify the national worship are all, without exception, attributed to the king (2 Ki 23:4-25). Is the word dmo[}Y"w" then perhaps a subtle hint that the people were actually 'inactive' in all this, and just stood by, watching, but not really with it? Did they just take a 'wait and see' attitude to the reforms, participating in them where they had to, more or less coerced into doing what they did, but not as wholeheartedly in it as Josiah? It seems to me that this may indeed have been the case. From the polemic in Jeremiah (e.g. Je 7-8) it is certainly apparent that the reform measures only had a very superficial effect and were short-lived.

The whole reform process ends, according to 2 Kings 23:21, with the celebration of the Passover, commanded by the king in accordance with the Book of the Covenant. Widengren (1957:4) is probably right in seeing this celebration as the confirmation of the covenant. For this, Josiah is

⁴⁸ Kutsch (1967:22) argues that in this instance, as well as in Ex 34:10 it is not necessary to have another partner with whom to 'cut' (trk) the tyriB]. This fact is for him an important argument to prove his thesis that the word tyriB] did not in the first instance mean 'contract' or 'covenant' in the sense of a mutual agreement. Rather, for him tyriB] is an obligation, that one person can take upon himself to perform. While this is certainly correct, but I beg to disagree with his notion that 'no partner' is necessary, or even present. It seems to me that there is at least one other person present when a tyriB] is concluded in the Bible, and that is Yahweh. This I think is evident from the fact that Yahweh actually indicts people for not keeping 'his' covenant, when the context does not even indicate that he is a partner to the tyriB] (c.f. Ez 17:11-22)!

commended by the authors of kings even above David, who usually is the person all other kings are compared with.

3. The word **tyrīb]** in the Chronicler's history: 1-2 Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah

Although in the Hebrew canon, Chronicles is the last book and Ezra and Nehemiah precede it, I shall follow the order of the English Bible in tracing the word **tyrīb]** in these books for chronological reasons. Chronicles concludes with the exile (except for 2 Chr 36:22-23, which report of Cyrus' edict to allow the return of the Jews to their homeland), while Ezra-Nehemiah narrate the events of the returned community.

The question of the connection between these four books has been a matter of considerable debate. For the purposes of this study, a few remarks will suffice. Ezra-Nehemiah used to be regarded as part of the Chronicler's work. However, recent scholarship has been divided on the issue, and there is a growing consensus now that holds that though Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah probably originate from a common background they are nevertheless separate works. Rendtorff (1995a:297) observes that the agreement of the conclusion of Chronicles with the beginning of Ezra-Nehemiah need not necessarily indicate that the two books belong together. On the contrary, one may equally well argue that two works that were not originally related were combined by adding the beginning of the one to the end of the other or vice versa.

The dating of the books is also controversial. For my purposes, it is sufficient here to mention that suggested dates vary from about 520BCE to 200BCE (c f Alberty 1997:606). There is no reference to the Hellenistic period, which for those who would argue for a Hellenistic date indicates that the political developments in this era did not have any theological significance for the compilers of these books. While this may be so, I do not find such arguments particularly convincing and therefore I do not think that the books can be dated that late. After considering the discussions in Selman (1994:69-71) regarding Chronicles and Kidner (1979:136-140) regarding Ezra-Nehemiah, I find their dating of these books to dates somewhere in the fourth century BCE quite plausible and shall adopt their view here.

There is of course a great deal of overlap between Kings and Chronicles, and many of the contexts where **tyrīb]** occurs in Chronicles have already been discussed above when looking at Samuel and Kings. Therefore, the following discussion on **tyrīb]** in Chronicles will focus on the differences between Kings and Chronicles. Since I have already dealt with the topic of the 'Ark of the Covenant,' I have left out the verses in which this phrase occurs in this section.

3.1. **tyrīb]** in 1-2 Chronicles

3.1.1. 1 Chronicles 11:3: David made King over Israel by the people

The anointing of David as king over all Israel in 1 Chronicles 11:3 is retold in almost exactly the same words as in 2 Samuel 5:3, though the context in 1 Chronicles 11:1-2 is different. In line with

the Chronicler's emphasis on all Israel he reports that David is first anointed in the presence of all Israel at Hebron. No mention is made of the private anointing by Samuel in his father's house (1 Sm 16) or of his kingship over Judah alone in Hebron (2 Sm 5:5) before he became king over all the tribes. The text of 1 Chronicles 11:2 is reminiscent of the promises to David in 2 Samuel 7, especially verse 7. In verse 3 (c f 2 Sm 5:3), the word $\text{tyr}iB$ is probably best translated 'compact', as in NIV. It is not stipulated what the $\text{tyr}iB$ entails, but it is interesting that it is said that 'David made a compact' ($\text{tyr}iB$ $\text{dywID}; \mu h, l; \text{tr}ok]YIw$) with them. The preposition l indicates that it was David who set the terms of the covenant and the people accepted them by anointing him as king (c f Wilcock 1987:54). Selman (1994:138) notes that the covenant would have included 'the terms of kingship required by David, an oath of loyalty by king and people, and a religious ceremony' to ratify it. The only difference between 2 Samuel 5:3 and 1 Chronicles 11:3 is that the latter adds the words 'as the Lord had promised through Samuel'⁴⁹ since it does not recount the details of the accession history. The Chronicler assumed this to be common knowledge (c f Selman 1994:35).

3.1.2. 1 Chronicles 16:8-36 (Psalm 105:1-15): David's Psalm

One of the distinguishing features of Chronicles is the inclusion of Psalms, speeches and prayers which have no counterpart in Samuel and Kings, and 1 Chronicles 16:8-36 is one of these Psalms. It is a skilful combination of Psalms 105, 96 and 106, with slight variations 'that make it almost certain that earlier Scripture has been reinterpreted and applied to the circumstances of the Chronicler's time' (Selman 1994:168; see also Shipp 1993:33). The reason for the inclusion of these Psalms and Psalm fragments is that the Chronicler wants to call upon his readers to 'remember God's faithfulness to the covenant [with David] and [to call] upon God to remember the covenant with David, the choice of king and temple...' (c f Shipp 1993:39).

The relevant verses for my discussion are 1 Chronicles 16:14-22 (Psalm 105:7-15), which Shipp (1993:35) calls the 'Remember Section'. After an invitation to give thanks and praise to Yahweh, and to seek him ($\text{vr}d$, one of Chronicler's favourite words), the Psalmist (in the context of Chronicles, David)⁵⁰ then calls upon his hearers to remember God's promises. In verse 15 there is a slight, but important, change in Chronicles: instead of reading 'he (i e Yahweh) remembers' ($\text{rk}' z\acute{E}$, Ps 105:7) Chronicles has 'Remember (i e Israel)!' ($\text{Wrk}] zI$). Translations (including NIV) often emend the text in 1 Chronicles 16:15 in accordance with some LXX manuscripts, to conform to Psalm 105:8.⁵¹ While it is possible that there is a scribal error, I think there is no real justification for emending the text.⁵² In fact, it seems to me that the Chronicler deliberately used

⁴⁹ Samuel occurs twice before in Chronicles. Once in a genealogy (1 Chr 6:27) and in 1 Chr 9:22 where he is introduced as seer, who together with David appointed the gatekeepers to their positions.

⁵⁰ Psalm 105 has no heading and is not attributed to a particular person.

⁵¹ In fact, the reverse is also the case: there are also some manuscripts that read in Ps 105:8 $\text{Wrk}] zI$, in accordance with 1 Chr 16:15. See BHS Ps 105:8, note a.

⁵² Apart from LXX, BHS does not give any other manuscript evidence that would warrant the emendation. Hence I think MT should be retained.

the word $\text{Wrk}] \text{zI}$ for a different emphasis: *Israel* must remember what Yahweh has done through the covenant.

Selman (1994:169) points out that remembering in the Old Testament is far more than just an intellectual exercise; it means to act on that which is being remembered. According to the text, this act of remembering God's covenant must go on 'forever' ($\mu\text{l} ; / [\text{l}]$). In the historical context of the Chronicler, this imperative on Israel is vitally important. God had made a covenant with Abraham ($\mu\text{h}; \text{r}; \text{b}] \text{a}' \text{A} \text{t} \text{a}, \text{tr}' \text{K};$),⁵³ sworn it to Isaac ($\text{qj}; \text{x}] \text{yI} \text{l}] / \text{t} [; \text{Wb} \nu] \text{W}$),⁵⁴ confirmed it to Jacob ($\text{bqo} [\text{y} " \text{l}] \text{h}; \text{d}, \text{ymi} [\text{y} " \text{w} "$),⁵⁵ and given to Israel as an everlasting covenant ($\mu\text{l} ; / [\text{tyriB}] \text{laer}; \text{c}] \text{yI} \text{l}] \text{qj} \text{o} \text{l}]$).⁵⁶ This is a striking conglomeration of terms to highlight the absolute certainty of God's promises. There can be no doubt whatsoever regarding his faithfulness. And though these promises had been given centuries before, they were still valid, even, and especially for, the post-exilic community.

The content of the $\text{tyriB}]$ in 2 Chronicles 16:15-17 is God's promise to Abraham that he and his descendants will possess the land of Canaan *forever*. The significance for the community in the Judah of the Chronicler's day is profound: the land had been promised to the forefathers, lost during the exile, yet they now lived in it again, but under foreign rule. They might ask themselves what had become of the promises of God. The Psalm answers that question by saying: 'Remember, the covenant is *forever*. Do not forget it, God promised it and the land is still yours by divine inheritance.' This is quite different from the interpretation in Psalm 105, where it is Yahweh who remembers his covenant, though even there the emphasis is on God's absolute faithfulness even for the present worshipper, whoever he may be and whenever or wherever he may worship.

3.1.3. 2 Chronicles 5-6: The dedication of the Temple

In 2 Chronicles 5-6 the description of the dedication of the temple by Solomon, including his prayer, are repeated from 1 Kings 8, albeit with some minor changes. In 2 Chronicles 5:10 (NIV) it is said that '[t]here was nothing in the ark except the two tablets ($\text{t} / \text{jLuh}' \text{ynEv}]$) that Moses had placed ($\text{t}' \text{n} :$) in it at Horeb, where the Lord made a covenant ($\text{laer}; \text{c}] \text{yI} \text{ynEB}] \text{A} \mu [\text{i} \text{hw}; \text{hy} \text{d} \text{tr}' \text{K}; \text{rv}, \text{a} \}$) with the Israelites after they came out of Egypt.' In 1 Kings 8:9 the reference is to the *stone* tablets ($\mu\text{ynIb}; \text{a} \} \text{h}; \text{t} / \text{jlu} \text{ynEv}]$), that Moses placed ($\text{j}' \text{NIhi}$) in the ark. The remainder of the verse is the same as that in 2 Chronicles. This is one of the few occasions where the Sinai covenant is explicitly mentioned in Chronicles. Nevertheless, as Selman (1994:319) rightly remarks, the exodus and

⁵³ C f Gn 15:18-21, 17:1-22.

⁵⁴ C f Gn 26:1-5.

⁵⁵ C f Gn 28:13-15, 35:9-12.

⁵⁶ Israel may of course here just be a synonym for Jacob. However, the progression in the argument may also indicate that the nation is meant. If so, the reference may be to such promises as Ex 3:8, 6:4-8 etc.

covenant at Sinai are the foundation for the Chronicler's theme of the Davidic dynasty and the temple. It is interesting that the word $\text{tyr}iB]$ does not occur in this verse, but only the word $\text{tr}k$, which had obviously become a standard form to mean 'make a covenant'.

In 2 Chronicles 6:11, the first part of Solomon's prayer with which he blesses the people concludes with the words: 'There I have placed the ark, in which is the covenant of the Lord ($\text{hw:hy}\ddot{o} \text{tyr}iB] \mu\nu i \text{Arv},a\} \div /ra;h;A\text{ta}, \mu\nu i \mu\text{ycia}i:w:$) that he made with the people of Israel (NIV, $\text{tr}'K; \text{rv},a\} \text{laer}i:c]yI \text{ynEB}]A\mu[i]$).' The wording here differs significantly from that in 1 Kings 8:21. There, Solomon says he *provided a place* for the ark ($\div /ra;i:l; \mu/qm; \mu\nu i \mu\text{cia}i:w:$), and inside the ark there was the 'covenant that he made with *our fathers when he brought them out of Egypt* ($\text{Wnyteboa}]A\mu[i \text{tr}'K; \text{rv},a\} \mu\text{yIr}i:x]mi \text{År},a,me \mu\text{t}i:ao /ayxi/hB]$).' Thus, although the Sinai covenant is mentioned, it seems to be of little significance to the Chronicler. The reason for this omission is obscure. The Chronicler may simply have had a different text as his 'Vorlage' when he copied this section, but there may also be more profound reasons for the changes.

Sperling (1989:72) for example sums up his study on the use of $\text{tyr}iB]$ in the post-exilic writings with the statement that 'late biblical texts show that in the exilic and post-exilic periods, unconditional covenant, by which Yahweh and Israel remained in permanent relation had triumphed over the notion of conditional covenant that might be broken.' However, while there is some value in this observation, I think he overstates his point. It is true that the Chronicler significantly changed his source to leave out one more direct reference to the Exodus. Yet, the whole thrust of the prayer, otherwise repeated almost verbatim from the source, is that the covenant with David is based on the earlier covenant (a direct reference to it is in verse 5). In fact, as in Kings, the Davidic covenant is seen as a continuation of the Sinai $\text{tyr}iB]$, while the temple building is proof of God's faithfulness to the Davidic covenant.

That the Chronicler is well aware of the conditional nature of the covenant is evident in such texts as 1 Chronicles 28:9, a verse that incidentally is worded even more strongly than any of the conditional phrases in the Davidic covenant in 2 Samuel 7.⁵⁷ This verse has no parallel in Samuel and Kings, and therefore shows that the Chronicler, while emphasising the unconditional elements of the covenant with David, was not oblivious to its conditions. Furthermore, the emphasis on the law would also, in my opinion, seem to indicate that the Chronicler still considered the covenant conditions as valid. I therefore find Sperling's conclusion that '[b]y the post-exilic period the "law stood upon its own feet as an independent entity"' (Sperling 1989:59, quoting Noth), rather odd. Even in the deuteronomistic history the word $\text{tyr}iB]$ is very often coupled with terms usually

⁵⁷ It reads: '...if you forsake him, he will reject you *forever*' (NIV, emphasis added; $\ddot{o}j\}y\text{ni}z\ddot{o}y" \text{WNb}, z\ddot{o} ['T' A\mu a i w \ddot{o} d [' l i]$).

translated 'law', 'statute', 'commandment' or the like,⁵⁸ which shows that these terms could replace or emphasise *tyriB*].

To support his argument, Sperling contends that the post-exilic writings do not refer to the sin of breaking the covenant, even if it was possible or even expedient to do (e.g. Sperling 1989:60, 64). Rather, they refer to the breaking of laws, statutes and commandments, either in general or giving particular examples. Again, I do not find this argument particularly convincing. While it is true that there is no explicit reference in Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah stating that 'Israel broke the covenant,' this can also be said of pre-exilic writings. They too refer often to the breaking of laws, statutes and commandments, both in contexts where covenant is used and outside such scriptures. Amos is a good example. Only once, in Am 1:9 is the word *tyriB*] explicitly mentioned. Elsewhere, he refers to the breaking or rejecting of the law of the Lord and his decrees (e.g. 2:4) or cites particular laws that have been broken by the Israelites.

The expression 'you who keep your covenant of love...' (NIV, *ds, j, h'wō tyriB]h' rmevo*) which occurs in 2 Chronicles 6:14, which has only insignificant changes to the parallel verse in 1 Kings 8:23, will be examined later when the phrase is discussed in Nehemiah.

3.1.4. 2 Chronicles 13:5: A Covenant of Salt

The reign of Abijah is recounted in far more detail in 2 Chronicles 13 than it is in 2 Kings 15, in line with certain interests of the Chronicler.⁵⁹ He adds a speech by Abijah to Jeroboam, in which he refers to the Davidic covenant as a 'covenant of salt' (*jl 'm, tyriB*]) which was given to David and his descendants forever (*ql ; / [l]*). The phrase *jl 'm, tyriB*] is rather obscure, but it is instructive that among Oriental peoples salt was often used to ratify agreements, 'so that salt became the symbol of fidelity and constancy' (Harrison 1982:1056). Thus, the phrase seems to refer to the eternal and unchanging nature of the covenant that Yahweh had promised David. Hamilton (1997:947) says that '[a]s a symbol of permanence, a salt covenant may be a way of expressing an unbreakable covenant.' This is supported by Ezra 4:14, where the Aramaic phrase *an : j] l ' m] al ; k] yhe jl ' m]* (lit. 'we have eaten the salt of the palace', BDB, p. 1100) is translated in the NIV 'we are under an obligation to the palace' (following the suggestion of BDB, p. 1100: 'have assumed obligations of loyalty').

There are other references in the Old Testament, however, where the mention of salt does not refer to the constancy of the covenant, but to its curses. For example, Deuteronomy 29:23 (Hebrew 29:22) states that the 'whole land will be a burning waste of salt and sulfur...', and in Judges 9:45 we are told that Abimelech sprinkled salt on the city of Shechem when he had destroyed it. This is, according to Myers (cited by Fensham 1962:48) to show the 'perpetual desolation' of the city.

⁵⁸ For example, 1 Kings 11:11, 2 Kings 17:15, 34; 23:2-3.

⁵⁹ For more detail see Selman (1994:377-383).

Similar verses could be cited. The point is that the use of salt in these instances also points to permanence and continuity, albeit this time not to the promises but the curses of the covenant or to the permanent destruction of the place in question.

3.1.5. 2 Chronicles 15-16: Asa's reign

As was the case with Ahijah, the Chronicler devotes considerable more space to describe the reign of Asa than the Deuteronomist historian(s). Selman (1994:385) notes the interesting, chiasmic-type structure of the two chapters dealing with his reign, which centre around two covenants, one with the Lord and one with Ben-Hadad, king of Syria. The former, related in 2 Chronicles 15:10-19, has no parallel in Kings. It is the first of four covenant renewal ceremonies reported in Chronicles (only two are retold in Kings), which shows their significance in this book (c f Selman 1994:393-394).⁶⁰

The context of the covenant with the Lord is the victory of a small Judahite army over a large Cushite one due to Asa's explicit trust in the Lord (2 Chr 14:11-15). As a result, Yahweh sent the prophet Oded to Asa to encourage him in his religious reform programme (started in 2 Chr 14:4-5). Interestingly, the support of Yahweh for Asa is couched in conditional form: 'If you seek him, He will be found by you (אִם, לִי; אֶחָד מִיָּדַי וְהִנֵּנוּ לְךָ אֶת אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֶיךָ); but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you (אִם, תִּלְאָה, בְּזַעַף יָדְךָ וְהִנֵּנוּ לְךָ אֶת אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֶיךָ)' (2 Chr 15:2).⁶¹ This verse shows that the Chronicler was aware of the conditional aspects of the Davidic covenant and included them where it suited his purposes. In fact, in 2 Chronicles 24:20 the Prophet Zechariah tells Joash that because he had forsaken God, God also had forsaken him, as if to fulfill this prophecy to Asa.

Asa's immediate response to this prophecy was to remove foreign cult objects from the land (2 Chr 15:8). Then he called the people to gather in Jerusalem for a covenant (renewal) ceremony as the climax of the reform (c f Selman 1994:393). True to the Chronicler's emphasis on 'all Israel', not only Judahites and Benjaminites, but also many people from the former Northern Kingdom who had settled in Judah were present. The ceremony consisted in the offering of sacrifices, followed by the covenant making itself. Verse 12 states that the people 'entered into a covenant (lit. *the covenant*, תַּרְבִּיב) to seek the Lord God of their fathers (אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ) with all their heart and with all their soul' (NKJV).

⁶⁰ Selman (1994:394, note 1) rightly notes that these religious covenants are more important for Chronicles than for Kings, since the political covenants of Kings are all reported in Chronicles as well, but there are two more covenant renewals reported than in Kings.

⁶¹ Two of the Chronicler's favourite words occur in this verse, **וַרְדֵּף** (strive for, seek eagerly, c f McCarthy 1982:31; search out, consult, seek with care/application, c f BDB, p. 205) and **בְּזַעַף** (according to McCarthy 1982:31 'an emotional word implying not so much indifference as rejection').

The words *tyriB]b'*, 'the covenant', seems to indicate that it was not a completely new covenant that was concluded, but that an old one was renewed. The content of the *tyriB]* in this instance is for the people, including the king, to seek (*vrđ*) the Lord with all their hearts and souls (cf Dt 6:5, 10:12 for the expression 'with all...heart and ...soul'). If anyone did not do so, they were to be put to death in accordance with such laws as Deuteronomy 13:6-10. The word *vrđ* in this instance obviously means more than just a general attitude of following Yahweh, as in other contexts (1 Chr 28:9, 2 Chr 7:14, 34:3). I think Selman (1994:394) is right when he says that the meaning expresses the people's 'total obedience' and 'commitment' to Yahweh.

The ceremony is accompanied by sacrifices (2 Chr 15:11) and the swearing of an oath to Yahweh (*hw:hyl' W[b]V;YIw*) by the community, which adds to the solemnity of the occasion and underscores the commitment of the people to Yahweh. This is one of the many occasions where the word *tyriB]* is coupled with an oath,⁶² but I will defer comment on this important pair of words to the discussion on Ezra 10.

Sperling (1989:62-63) is opposed to the idea of calling the ceremony in 2 Chronicles 15:10-15 a covenant renewal. In his opinion, it is merely a 'sworn agreement to a specific course of action; namely, to rely on Yahweh in time of crisis' (ibid). However, I think this is rather an understatement and disregards the links with deuteronomic language and themes (see above). The previous and following removal of idolatrous worship items and the queen mother seems to indicate that there was more to it than merely a commitment to 'rely on Yahweh in times of crisis'. The religious reform, started earlier in Asa's reign, resulted in a re-commitment of the people to the worship of Yahweh in this ceremony. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that even for Asa this recommitment was a rather short-lived affair. This is evident in the following chapter which relates the covenant between Asa and Ben Hadad of Syria, a move that is seen as an indication of his refusal to trust in Yahweh.

The differences between 2 Chronicles 16:1-6 and 1 Kings 15:17-22 are only minor with regard to the theme of the covenant, therefore the discussion need not be repeated here.

3.1.6. 2 Chronicles 21:7: Yahweh's promise not to destroy the House of David

In 2 Chronicles 21 the events of the reign of Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat are recounted. According to the writers of Kings and Chronicles, he did 'evil in the sight of the Lord' because of his marriage to the daughter of Ahab. Chronicles adds to the report in 2 Kings 8:16-19 that he rid himself of any other contenders to the throne by killing his brothers and other officials (*laer;c]yI yreC;*). In 2 Chronicles 21:7 we are then informed that despite all these wicked deeds of Jehoram, the Lord was not willing to destroy the house of David 'because of the covenant the Lord had made with David (*dywId;l] tr'K; rv,a} tyriB]h'*

⁶² Other instances are for example Gn 26:28, 31; 31:44, 54; Dt 4:31, 29:9-15; Jos 9:15; 1 Sm 20:16-17; 2 Ki 11:4; 1 Chr 16:16. More scriptures could be added, but these may suffice.

÷ ['m' l])...He had promised to maintain a lamp for him and his descendants forever' (NIV; $\mu\text{ymiY:h'AlK}; \text{wyn:b;l}W \text{rynI} /l \text{ttel}; \text{rm'a}; \text{rv,a}k'w\text{õ}$). The Chronicler has made two significant changes and additions to the parallel verse in 2 Kings 8:19. Firstly, he writes 'house of David' instead of Kings' 'Judah'. Then he explicitly notes the *covenant* that the Lord had made with David, where Kings only speaks of 'David his servant'. Both changes reveal the emphasis of the Chronicler in writing his history of Judah as the true Israel (also reflected in the designation 'king of Israel' for Jehoram, instead of Kings' 'king of Judah' in verse 2) and particularly his focus on the Davidic covenant. The lamp (rynI) was, as Wiseman (1993:138, 216) rightly notes, more than just a symbol of continuing life and succession. It would also remind the reader/hearer of the covenant (Ps 132:17; there the word for lamp is rnE).⁶³ Nevertheless, the continuity and perpetuity of the Davidic covenant is highlighted with two words and phrases that speak of these qualities: rynI and $\mu\text{ymiY:h'AlK};$, here translated 'forever'. The emphasis is thus on the unconditional aspect of this covenant, even though there may be chastisement for an individual king in the line of David (as indicated in 2 Chronicles 21:18-20 for Jehoram).

3.1.7. 2 Chronicles 23: King Joash

There are a number of significant changes in 2 Chronicles 23 compared to the account in 2 Kings 11 regarding Joash's accession to the throne and the establishment of a covenant between king, clergy and people. For example, Chronicles lists the names of the captains of hundreds with whom Jehoiada made a covenant. Even before the assassination of the wicked queen Athaliah, the 'assembly made a covenant ($\text{tyriB}] \text{lh}; Q; h'AlK}; \text{trök}] \text{YIw}$ ") with the king in the house of God' (NKJV, 2 Chr 23:3), indicating that Joash was personally present at the event (Selman 1994:446). The content of this covenant is that 'the king's son shall reign' ($\text{Jl}] \text{zm}] \text{yI} \text{Jl}, M, h' A\div b, \text{hNEhi}$), in other words, it is a covenant between the people and the king. Selman (1994:444) astutely observes that the designation 'the king's son' implies that the people apparently pretended Athaliah did not even exist.

In verse 11 the crowning ceremony is described, again with slight additions to 2 Kings 11. In 2 Chronicles, the king is not only anointed, but also given a crown (or diadem, similar to that worn by priests). As in 2 Kings, he also receives a 'Testimony' (NKJV; $\text{tWd} [\text{eh};$), whose identity is disputed. Selman (1994:447) notes that the Testimony has been variously understood to mean jewels or some form of insignia (perhaps like the sceptre in British tradition?), or a document. I think that the Hebrew word $\text{tWd} [\text{eh};$ strongly suggests a written document, though what type

⁶³ The word has also been equated with 'dominion, yoke', apparently from Akkadian 'nir' = yoke (Hanson, quoted in Selman 1997:160). It is also interesting that all the occurrences of rynI are in contexts where there is some potentially fatal threat to the dynasty of David, as if God wanted to emphasise that even in the darkest hour the David's house will survive, not because of any merit of David or any of his descendants, but because of Yahweh's promise to him, which cannot fail (c f Selman 1997:160).

of document this was may be debated.⁶⁴ Whatever its nature, Selman (1994:448) is certainly right in noting that ‘it was a symbol that Joash was to rule according to God’s covenant promises and not on his own terms.’ The Chronicler, unlike Kings, also speaks explicitly of the reinstating of the Davidic dynasty through Joash (‘as the Lord has said *of the sons of David*’, NKJV 2 Chr 23:3, emphasis added).

The high point of 2 Chronicles 23 is not the crowning of the king, but the renewal of the nation’s covenant relationship with Yahweh. Thus, the changes in 2 Chronicles 23:16 compared with 2 Kings 11:17 are significant. In Chronicles, Jehoiada not only acts as mediator of the covenant, as could be inferred from 2 Kings 11:17, but he himself is a party in the covenant: [d;y:/hyÒ trok]YIw" J1,M,h' ÷ybeW µ[;h;AlK; ÷ybeW /nyBe tyriB]. Another interpretation of the suffix ‘him’ may be that the Lord is referred to (c f Selman 1994:449), but I think this is less likely. The Chronicler has left out the covenant between the king and the people in 2 Kings 11:17, but this is not surprising, since he had already mentioned it in verse 3. The content of the covenant in verse 16 was for all participants ‘to be the Lord’s people’ (hw:hyl' µ[;l] t/yh]li), a reminder of the covenant formula.

As has already been indicated in the treatment of 2 Kings 11, this is a renewal of the Sinai covenant, as evidenced by the resulting purge of false worship forms in the country. The Chronicler also explicitly states that the forms of worship instituted by David were restored (verse 18, obviously referring to 1 Chr 23-26). However, for all his enthusiasm for Yahweh as long as Jehoiada was still alive, Joash did not follow through with his commitment. This reform too was only short-lived, and apostasy soon became the order of the day again (c f 2 Chronicles 23:18). In the end Joash was killed through a conspiracy (2 Chronicles 23:23-27) - another instance where an individual member of the Davidic line had to suffer the consequences of his desertion of Yahweh.

3.1.8. 2 Chronicles 29: Hezekiah’s covenant

The Chronicler’s report about Hezekiah’s reign differs significantly from that in Kings. True to his main themes, he selects different material to show Hezekiah’s piety, in particular the purification of the temple and reinstallation of proper temple worship. In the course of these reform measures, Hezekiah is reported to call the priests and Levites (2 Chronicles 29:4) to outline for them the programme for the reform. He calls them to purify themselves first, then the temple, and observes that ‘it is in my heart to make a covenant (tyriB] t/rk]li) with the Lord God of Israel (yhel;aô hw:hyl' laer;c]yI), that his fierce wrath may turn away from us’ (NKJV, 2 Chr 29:10). It is significant that Hezekiah is the initiator of the covenant. He wants to commit *himself* to the Lord, so that God’s anger may be turned away from the nation. This points to the fact that it is not a new covenant he purports to institute, but to reaffirm and renew the covenant of Sinai. That it is not the Davidic covenant that is in view in the context is evident from

⁶⁴ It could have been a special document set up between the people and the king on that particular occasion, or, perhaps more likely, some form of the covenant laws (c f Dt 17:18-20).

the measures taken for the purification of worship in Israel, which were never part of the Davidic covenant. However, notwithstanding these remarks, the importance of the reform measures was to re-instate worship forms according to David's instructions (2 Chr 29:25-30).

It is also interesting that in this case we are not told of a public affirmation of the covenant. This, as well as the preposition ׀ before the word Yahweh has caused some scholars to assume that it was merely a one-sided oath on Hezekiah's part. Selman (1994:488) disagrees with this notion on the ground that covenants were usually confirmed by oaths and therefore he finds this argument unconvincing. He may be right in assuming this, since, although there is no official covenant ceremony, the results of Hezekiah's covenant are nevertheless evident. The temple gets purged and reinstated, and there is a public celebration of the Passover, similar to that under King Josiah a few decades later. This latter ceremony is often seen as the crowning event of the covenant renewal that Josiah instituted and it may well be the same in this instance. On the other hand, there is no other mention of Hezekiah's intention to make a covenant, and so it may well be that it was just a commitment to Yahweh on his part alone. Whichever view is taken, this reformation too was only short-lived, and during the reign of Manasseh, Hezekiah's son, the nation reverted to the apostate pattern the Chronicler and other authors in the Bible always denounced.

3.1.9. 2 Chronicles 34: Covenant renewal under Josiah

The text of 2 Chronicles 34:29-33 makes only minor changes to its Vorlage in 2 Kings 23:1-3, but one of these is very significant. The first, minor, adaptation is that in Chronicles it is not the prophets but the Levites who gather together with the king and priests and all the people at the house of the Lord. Selman (1994:535) suggests that this is 'allied with the repeated exercise of a prophetic ministry by the Levites (cf. 1 Ch. 25:1, 3; 2 Ch. 20:14; 29:30) and the prophetic qualifications of their founders (cf. 1 Ch 25:5; 2 Ch. 29:25; 35:15), though it is unnecessary to assume that the Levites had taken over all the work of the prophets by the Chronicler's time.'

The second change in Chronicles tells us that the king stood 'in *his place*' (NKJV; /dm] [;Al [', 2 Chr 34:31; lit actually either 'by' or 'on his place') instead of 'by' or 'on the pillar' (dm] ['h;Al [', 2 Ki 23:3). Of course, this could just be a mistake, since the consonants are the same, except that w and d are exchanged. The LXX for example adopts the reading of 2 Kings 23:3 in this instance (c f BHS p. 1570, note a on 2 Chr 34:31), and NIV actually reads 'by his pillar', apparently adopting the reading of the Targum (c f Payne on 2 Chr 34:31), which would only mean a change in pointing, but leave the consonantal text intact. However, Selman (1994:535) may be right in suggesting another reason for the change, namely that it reflects the absence of the two pillars Jakin and Boaz in the second temple.

The third change in Chronicles I think is the most substantive one, and it supports the thesis I offered in my interpretation of 2 Kings 23:1-3 above. There I suggested that the words 'all the people *took a stand* for the covenant' (tyriB]B' μ [;h;AlK; dmo [}Y"w") were a subtle hint that the people were actually inactive, so to speak, more or less coerced into

participating in the reforms. This seems to be supported not only by the reading in 2 Chronicles 34:32 that the king ‘made all who were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin *take a stand*’ (NKJV, emphasis added; $\text{dme}[\]Y"w$), but also by the similar expression in verse 33. It reads: ‘And Josiah removed all the abominations from the whole land that belonged to the children of Israel, and he *made* everyone present in Israel *diligently serve* the Lord their God. *As long as he lived* (lit. *all his days*) they did not turn away from following the Lord God of their fathers’ (my own translation. The Hebrew for the first part of the verse reads: $\mu\eta, yhel\zeta a\hat{o} hw:hy\hat{o}Ata, d/b[\]l' laer;c]yIB] ax;m]NIh'AlK; tae dbe[\]Y"w$ (emphasis added)). The whole thrust of this verse, I think, is ample evidence that the Israelites were only taking part in the reform measures because they did not have a choice, not because they were convinced that it was right. Selman (1994:535-536) makes the same point.

3.2. **tyriB]** in Ezra-Nehemiah

The books of Ezra-Nehemiah report, selectively, the fate of Israelites who have returned to the land of their fathers after the exile. The main focus of the two books is the restoration of the temple and the city of Jerusalem, as well as the re-institution of proper worship and a pure people that is distinct from others. The word **tyriB]** only occurs five times in the work of Ezra-Nehemiah.

3.2.1. Ezra 10:3: Improper marriages dissolved

The third⁶⁵ part of the book of Ezra, chapters 7-10, tell the story of how Ezra, the priest and scribe, came from exile in Babylon to Judah in the reign of Artaxerxes, who supported Ezra’s mission with a letter. After arriving in the land of Judah, he was told of the mixed marriages that had been concluded between the Jews, including priests and Levites, and other peoples living in the land. Hearing this, Ezra sat down, dumbfounded and grieving, and at the time of the evening offering he finally burst out into a prayer of confession, apparently in the presence of the whole assembly (Ezra 9:5-10:1). The reaction of the people to this public prayer of repentance by Ezra was their own acknowledgement of their sin, expressed by one of their members, Shechaniah, in verses 3-4 (NKJV): ‘We have trespassed against our God ($\text{Wnyhel}\zeta\text{abe Wnl}][\]m; \text{Wnj}]n" a$ }), and have take pagan wives from the peoples of the land....let us make a covenant with our God ($\text{Wnyhel}\zeta\text{ale tyriB]Atr;k]nI}$) to put away all these wives and those who have been born to them....and let it be done according to the law. Arise, for this matter is your responsibility ($\text{rb;D;h' } \hat{o}y\text{, [;}$). We also are with you. Be of good courage, and do it.’ As a result, Ezra got up and ‘made the leaders of the priests, the Levites, and all Israel swear an oath ([B'v]Y"w) that they would do according to this word. So they swore an oath (W[beV;YIw)’ (Ezra 10:5).

⁶⁵ The book of Ezra can be roughly divided into three sections, chapters 1-2 (Return under Zerubbabel), chapters 3-6 (Rebuilding the temple) and chapters 7-10 (Ezra’s return to Judah and his reform).

The confession of Shechaniah is very emphatic, and it may be better to translate, 'It is *we* who have been unfaithful to our God...' - not Ezra, who had started the confession, and was joined only later by the people. Shechaniah then proposed the remedy for the people's sin, namely to 'make a covenant' (Wnyhelꞓale tyriB]Atr;k]nI), using the standard word for making a covenant, trk, for the procedure. However, no ceremony seems to follow except that we are told that Ezra made the people swear an oath, and an assembly was called to gather in Jerusalem to deal with the issue. The preposition l indicates that the initiative for the covenant came from the people. The content of the tyriB] was to 'put away all these wives and those who have been born to them'. In other words, the emphasis is on one aspect of the law, not the whole corpus as in other covenant renewals. Thus, it may be more appropriate to speak of an 'obligation' that the people promised to keep rather than a covenant.

On the other hand, the people wanted to mend the broken relationship between themselves and Yahweh by conforming practically to one of the laws stipulated in the earlier covenant of Mt Sinai (Ex 34:15-16) which they had disregarded. While the focus therefore was just on the one commandment, the word tyriB] may well indicate that the intention was to finally embrace more than just the one stipulation. This is, however, conjecture.

It has been proposed that the swearing of an oath in this context was unnecessary and rather pleonastic (McCarthy 1982:33). McCarthy (1982:33) continues to argue that the pleonasm expressed the fact that the 'action returned to Ezra' who then involved the community in it. Sperling (1989:53) though goes further. He remarks that 'the pleonasm indicates that *kārat berit*...in this pericope has lost its earlier precise technical sense. It is rather, the oath which gives binding force to the community's action.' However, while I can see his point and to a certain extent also agree with him, I wonder whether the coupling of making a covenant with the swearing of an oath in this instance is really just a pleonasm and only significant in post-exilic times.

There are numerous instances in the Old Testament where the making of a covenant is coupled with the swearing of an oath (see note 57 above). Indeed, such references as Genesis 50:24⁶⁶ which speak of the swearing of an oath without mentioning the word tyriB], though referring to one, indicate that the swearing of oaths was a common feature of covenant making. Moreover, it seems that the phrases 'make a covenant' (tyriB] trk) and 'swear an oath' could be used interchangeably from the earliest times. If this is so, then one cannot argue that tyriB] trk had lost its precise technical sense only in post exilic times, since even before then the phrase was

⁶⁶ There, Joseph says to his brothers that God swore an oath ([B'v]nI) to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that he would give them the land of Canaan. Yet, in Genesis 15 and 17, where the covenants between Yahweh and Abraham are made, there is no mention of an oath. However, later (Gn 26:3) Yahweh speaks to Isaac of the 'oath' (h[;buV]h') that he made with Abraham and that he will establish with him too.

taken to mean 'swear an oath'.⁶⁷ I concur with McCarthy (1982:33) who observes that '[k]ârat berît itself signifies a most solemn oath', whether or not we are told that it was accompanied by formal ceremonies. Indeed, I would argue that the swearing of an oath was part of a covenant ceremony, whether or not it is explicitly described in every detail.

Both McCarthy and Sperling note the absence of rituals in Ezra 10. There are no sacrifices (so McCarthy 1982:33), no ceremonial cursing or blessing, no rejoicing (I dare say, in the circumstances the last is not unexpected). But there is one aspect that is vital in any covenant (renewal) procedure, which is also present here, namely acceptance by the people of the terms (Ezra 10:12-14, 18-44). The assembly explicitly expresses that they will do as Ezra said (verse 12), but ask for a thorough investigation of each case. Their acceptance is reminiscent of that of the Israelites at Mt Sinai (Ex 19:8). What is however striking is that only the priests offered a guilt offering for their sins (verse 19). One wonders how serious the people really were, in particular since Nehemiah later on⁶⁸ had to deal with the same problem again (Ne 13:23-27).

3.2.2. Nehemiah 1 and 9: Two prayers of confession - unfaithful Israel and faithful Yahweh

The book of Nehemiah starts with the report of Hanani, who had come from Jerusalem to Shushan, telling Nehemiah about the conditions in his native land and city. Nehemiah was so shocked about what he heard that he sat down and wept and prayed to God about it. Before confessing his and his people's sins and presenting his petitions, he calls Yahweh the 'great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love (דס, j, w: tyriB]h' rmevo) with those who love him and obey his commands' (Ne 1:5, NIV). Sperling (1989:54) translates the phrase דס, j, w: tyriB]h' rmev 'keeper of the covenantal loyalty'. Both translations point out that Yahweh is loyal to his people because of the covenant he made with them, even though the people themselves have not been loyal to God (verses 6-7). The context makes it clear that the tyriB] in verse 5 is the Sinai covenant (verse 8). The terms used to describe the stipulations of the tyriB] in verse 7 are the ones common in other parts of scripture: commandments, statutes, ordinances (uyfiP;v]Mih', uyQijuh', t/x]Mih').

In Nehemiah 9, the word tyriB] occurs twice (in verses 8 and 32), both times in the course of a confessional prayer by the community, which ends in their recommitment to Yahweh (Ne 10:1-2, English versions 9:38-10:1). It is interesting that this prayer is in the context of a separation from all foreigners (Ne 9:2).

⁶⁷ It would be interesting to study the dating of texts where tyriB] and 'oath' are used together, or where it is implied that an oath refers to a tyriB]. Unfortunately, the limited scope of this work does not allow such a detailed analysis.

⁶⁸ Although I am aware of the problems regarding the sequence of the books, I accept the order of events as presented in the present books Ezra-Nehemiah, i.e. that Ezra came first, followed by Nehemiah.

In verse 8 *tyriB]* is used as the praying community recounts the blessings of Yahweh throughout the history of Israel, beginning with a covenant with Abraham. Because God found Abraham ‘faithful’ (*÷m;aÔn<*), he made a covenant with him (*tyriB]h' /M[i t/rk;wÕ*). The word *tyriB]* is preceded by the definite article, and so a specific covenant is in view whose content was to give Abraham and his descendants the whole land of Canaan. Holmgren (1992:252) rightly notes that while the chapter is replete with reminiscences of the Mosaic covenant, it is never explicitly stated that there ever was a covenant concluded at Mt Sinai. ‘The Abraham covenant is *the* covenant - the covenant whose teaching, at least in this prayer, includes that of Sinai’ (Holmgren 1992:252, emphasis his).

It is interesting to consider the structure of Nehemiah 9:8:

- A You found his heart faithful before you (*ðyn<p;l] ÷m;aÔn</i>
/bb;l]Ata, t;ax;m;W)*
- B And made a covenant with him (*tyriB]h' /M[i t/rk;wÕ*)
- C To give (him) (*ttel;*)
- D the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Ammorites
- D' and the Perizzites and Jebusites and Girgashites
- C' To give (it) to his descendants (*/[r]z¼l] ttel;*)
- B' You performed your word (*ðyr ,b;D]Ata, µq,T;w"*)
- A' Because you are righteous (*hT;a; qyDix' yKi*).

Set out in this way, it is obvious that lines A and A', B and B', C and C' are parallel. Abraham's faithfulness is matched to Yahweh's righteousness (though of course it can never attain Yahweh's perfection). The words ‘covenant’ (*tyriB]h'*) and ‘word’ (*ðyr ,b;D]*) can be considered synonymous in this verse. Yahweh not only made a covenant with Abraham, but also fulfilled (lit. ‘performed, established’) what he had promised by giving him and his descendants the land of Canaan and all its inhabitants. Unfortunately, Abraham's faithfulness to Yahweh was not matched by Israel in her chequered history, not even by the returned exiles, as the remainder of the prayer shows. Yet, Yahweh had remained faithful, even when Israel had not followed suit.

It is this faithfulness of Yahweh which the confessing community draws upon in Nehemiah 9:32. There, the phrase ‘who keeps covenant and mercy’ occurs again, in slightly different form:

ðs ,j,h'wÕ tyriB]h' rme/v. In the previous verses, the prayer leaders recount the wilderness wanderings and the conquest of the land, as well as the history of the monarchy, during which the Israelites continuously proved to be unfaithful to Yahweh, despite many acts of deliverance. However, Yahweh, unlike the Israelites, was *ðs ,j,h'wÕ tyriB]h' rme/v*, ‘keeper of the covenantal loyalty’ (Sperling 1989:55), and because of Yahweh's loyalty the praying community is back in the land from which they had been exiled, ready to recommit themselves to Yahweh.

In the context of Nehemiah 9:32, it seems that the word *tyriB*], as it is used in the phrase *ds, j, h' wō tyriB]h' rme/v*, first of all refers to the Abrahamic covenant in verse 8, but also to the implied Sinai covenant whose stipulations have been outlined, but which has not been explicitly mentioned, in the remaining prayer. Most interesting, however, is the avoidance of the word *tyriB*] in Nehemiah 10:1 (English 9:38). The NKJV translates the verse: 'And because of all this, We make a sure *covenant* and write it; Our leaders, our Levites, and our priests seal it.' However, the word translated 'covenant' is not *tyriB*], but *hn:m;a}*.

I think that Holmgren (1992:253) is right in observing that this avoidance of the term *tyriB*] in favour of *hn:m;a}* is 'intentionally used here in order to link this covenant with that of the long-ago Abraham covenant referred to in Neh 9,8.' He argues that the idea behind this was as follows: Abraham's faithfulness (*÷m;aÔn<*) was the reason for Yahweh's covenant with him to give him the land. Hence, if the exiles wanted to have full possession of the land, there had to be a wholehearted return to their God and they had to serve him in the same manner of faithfulness as Abraham had done. Thus, by entering into a 'faithful covenant' (as Holmgren 1992:253 translates *hn:m;a}*) there would be a possibility that Yahweh would answer them by giving the land to them to fully possess it themselves, rather than work and live in it as the servants of another nation.

Sperling (1989:59) interprets the avoidance of the word *tyriB*] in Nehemiah 10:1 similarly, but with a different slant. In his opinion (if I interpret him correctly), the word is avoided because it reminded the Israelites of the conditional covenant at Sinai, and therefore the law, while the post-exilic Jews did not view 'law as primarily a matter of adherence to the covenant, but as an entity in its own right.' The statutes of this law were binding because the only God, Yahweh, had given it to Moses on Mt Sinai. The 'independence of law represents not the triumph of "legalism" over *covenant* but the triumph of monotheism over *polytheism and monolatry*. To enter a covenant to serve only Yahweh made little sense in the post-exilic period, when for monotheistic Judaism there were no competing gods to serve' (Sperling 1989:59-60, emphasis added). This is an interesting argument, but I am not so sure that this is the correct interpretation of the reasons for avoiding the word *tyriB*]. On the one hand, 'covenant' is in itself a legal concept, as is clearly indicated by the usual addition of stipulations and oaths that were taken to ratify it. Thus, it seems odd to argue that one could misinterpret the independence of the law as a triumph of legalism over covenant. On the other hand, if the problem of foreign gods had been completely solved, why then was there such an insistence on the avoidance of foreign marriages by both Ezra and Nehemiah? The whole reason for not marrying foreigners was to avoid the temptation to worship other gods (c f Ex 34:15-17), yet the problem of foreign marriages seems to have persisted throughout the post-exilic era (c f for example Malachi 2:11).

One other interesting feature of Nehemiah 9-10 is its reminiscence of ancient treaty forms (c f Brown: 1998:171). The prayer in chapter 9 reminds us of the historical prologues in Hittite

treaties. In chapter 10 there is a written statement of general and also explicit stipulations that the people promise to perform. In addition to the signatures of particular people (which is similar to modern treaties!) the people also ‘entered into a *curse* and an *oath*’ (Ne 10:29, NKJV, emphasis added; $h[;Wbv]biW h[;a ;B] \mu yaib ;W$) to walk in God’s Law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the [Yahweh] our Lord, and his ordinances and statutes...’ (Ne 10:30, English 10:29). While the curses are not explicitly mentioned, one may assume, since the basis of the covenant was the law of Moses, that the curses in Leviticus 26 or Deuteronomy 27-28 are meant. I think that all this speaks against the notion that in the post-exilic period the ‘law stood upon its own feet’ (Sperling 1989:59, citing Noth) apart from the covenant concept. Maybe the reasons for avoiding the use of the word $\tau y r i B]$ as far as possible were rather that it had become a cliché, with a host of wrong connotations attached to it.

3.2.3. Ne 13:29: The Covenant of the priesthood and the Levites

The last reference to a $\tau y r i B]$ in the books of Ezra-Nehemiah is in Nehemiah 13:29, where Nehemiah complains about priests and Levites who ‘defiled the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites ($\mu Y I w I l] h ' w \tilde{O} h N : h u K] h ' \tau y r i b] W h N : h u K] h ' y l e a \tilde{O} G :)$ ’ by marrying foreign wives. The reference to the $h N : h u K] h ' \tau y r i B]$ seems to relate to the special covenant that Yahweh made between Phinehas and himself (Nu 25:12). A covenant with Levi is also mentioned in Jeremiah 33:21 and Malachi 2:4-5, 8, but there is never an explicit statement as to what exactly the covenant with Levi entailed. However, the following points may illuminate the issue somewhat.

Priests and Levites had no part in the land when it was distributed to the other tribes; Yahweh was their portion (c f Dt 10:9, 18:1-8). In other words, they were to have an even more special relationship with God than the ordinary Israelite. Although the word $\tau y r i B]$ is not mentioned in these contexts, the concept is, conceivably, present. In Deuteronomy 18:5 the special election of the Levites is explicitly mentioned, very similar to the election of David. The last phrase of Numbers 18:20 reads: ‘I am your portion and your inheritance...’ There the phraseology is very similar to Yahweh’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 15:1. Therefore, I think, one may argue that implicitly, there was indeed a covenant between Yahweh and the priests and Levites. It promised them a particularly close relationship with himself, but also demanded their allegiance and faithful fulfilment of their duties for the Israelites. The priests and Levites were to be the mediators between the nation and Yahweh, the priests offering sacrifices, the Levites doing other duties in the sanctuary (either in the tent or later in the temple). They also were to be the teachers of the nation, and their children were to follow in their footsteps and take up this high calling.

There were in fact special regulations about what kind of woman the Priests were to marry (Lv 21:7, 13-15). Though it does not explicitly mention a prohibition against marrying non-Israelites, I think it is obvious that it excluded women who were not Yahweh-worshippers, and the inference in Nehemiah is that foreign wives would be worshippers of other gods. Therefore, when a priest or

Levite married a foreign woman, this was tantamount to treason, since it was inevitable that any children born from such unions would become acquainted with the gods of their mothers and so pollute and water down true Yahwism.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ In fact, John Davis (1986:245) notes that ‘in the marriage contract recognition had to be given to the gods of the various parties involved. To permit such false worship to be perpetuated and to allow the names of false deities to be widely circulated served as an endorsement of that false religion.’

4. The word **tyrīb]** in the Wisdom Books - Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Daniel

The word **tyrīb]** does not occur frequently in Wisdom literature. In fact, there are a number of books where there is not a single mention of it at all: Ruth, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Lamentations, and Esther. Thus, only Job, Psalms, Proverbs and Daniel need to be discussed here. I follow the order of the books in the English Bibles.

4.1. **tyrīb]** in Job

In Job there are two occurrences of the word **tyrīb]**, the first of which is in Job 5:23. This verse is part of Eliphaz' first speech to Job (Job 4-5). In chapter 5:17-27, Eliphaz tells Job to cheer up and pull himself together. His main message is that God is always with the righteous, and though there may be chastising, this will only last for a while. God will come to the righteous person's aid once again, redeem him from famine (verse 20), war and destruction (verses 21-22), and there is no reason for the righteous person to be afraid.

The word **tyrīb]** occurs in verse 23, in the rather obscure phrase 'you will have a covenant with the stones of the field' (NIV; $\delta\tau, \text{yrīb] } \text{hd}, \text{C}; \text{h}' \text{ ynEb]a' } \text{Au[i } \text{yKi}$), which has attracted some equally obscure interpretations. Pope (1982:41) for example translates the verse 'You will have a pact with the field-sprites [sic], Savage beasts will make peace with you.' He justifies this translation by mentioning that the MT's 'stones of the field' is difficult, because it is strange to make a covenant with them - what would they do as their part of the agreement (Pope 1982:45-46)? He prefers to adopt the suggestion by Köhler (referred to by Pope 1982:46), who reads 'lords of the field' ($\text{dônê } \text{haúúâleh}$) or 'sons of the field' ($\text{bênê } \text{haúúâleh}$) instead of 'stones of the field' ($\text{'abnê } \text{haúúâleh}$). 'These "sons/lords of the field" are understood as the spirits who inhabit the soil and have to be placated by the farmer', and are probably related to the 'satyrs' ($\text{æ } \text{'îrîm}$) which the Israelites seem to have placated with bloody sacrifices (c f Lv 17:5-7) (Pope 1982:46).

Francis Andersen (1984:122) has, I think, a more plausible suggestion when noting that the parallelism of the verse suggests that 'stones of the field' means 'untamed beasts'. On the other hand, he is quite intrigued by Pope's interpretation. In a footnote he explains that there is no need to emend the text, as some scholars have done (he does not mention names), but that, according to Blommerde (quoted by Andersen 1984:122, note 3), 'abnê is b'ne with prosthetic aleph, which then would allow for the translation 'sons of the field'.

These suggestions are interesting, but I wonder whether there is not a simpler interpretation. Job 5:19 uses a standard wisdom formula: 'From six calamities he will rescue you; in seven no harm will befall you.' In many instances such formulae are then followed by a list of what (in this case)

seven things God will rescue Job from. I believe that in Job 5 from verse 20 onwards we have such a list of things, and that verse 23 is probably the last item listed (this, however, I am not sure about. It may be that verses 24-26 are included as well). I also think that the expression ‘covenant with the stones of the field’ is not to be taken literally at all, but figuratively, especially since we are dealing here with poetry. Given these two premises, I think that the phrase ‘you shall have a covenant with the stones of the field’ in verse 23a is rather parallel to the phrase ‘You shall laugh at destruction and famine’ in 22a. The meaning of verse 23 is basically that God will protect Job from calamity coming from wild beasts as well as poor soil conditions that might inhibit good harvests (c f NIV Study Bible (Barker 1995:731) for a similar suggestion). The question is thus not what part of the agreement the stones will keep - the covenant refers back to the promise of protection and deliverance in verse 19.

The second occurrence of *tyriB]* in Job is in a speech of Job lasting from chapter 26 to 31, whose last section, chapters 29-31, is quite aptly headed ‘Job’s Summary Defense’ in the NKJV. In these last three chapters, Job reminisces about the past, how he was close to God and respected in society, but how he had become the laughing stock of everyone due to the calamities that have befallen him. He agonises over the injustice of it all, since in his opinion he has not committed any sins serious enough to warrant such punishment from God. Chapter 31 outlines several charges people might have made against Job, but he denies them all (c f Andersen 1984:238). The form in which he couches his defense is ‘if I have done such and such a crime, let such and such a punishment happen to me.’

In chapter 31:1, *tyriB]* occurs in the expression ‘I have made a covenant with my eyes (*yn:y[el] yTir'K; tyriB]*) not to look lustfully at a girl (*hl;WtB]Al[' ÷nE/Bt]a, hm;W)*’ (NIV). Obviously, the ‘covenant’ in this verse has nothing to do with a bilateral agreement, but is simply another way to express the making of an oath and imposing a restraint upon himself. Pope (1982:225) has aptly translated the phrase ‘I have put a ban on my eyes’.⁷⁰ The use of the word *trk* in this context shows, I think, that it had become a general expression for ‘make a covenant’, which may or may not have had overtones of a particular ceremony in this case. It seems the expression ‘I have made a covenant’ was used to show the utter sincerity and seriousness of Job’s character.

4.2. *tyriB]* in Psalms

The book of Psalms is a collection of songs and poems in which the worshipper addresses God rather than God addressing the worshipper (McCullough 1955:3). In this treatment of selected Psalms there will be a brief introduction to each Psalm where the word *tyriB]* occurs,

⁷⁰ However, I do not think that his emendation of the word ‘virgin’ to ‘folly’ in the second stich is justified especially since there is no manuscript evidence to support such a change (see BHS). C f his elaborate explanation of this emendation at pages 228-229, which I shall not repeat here, as it is not really relevant to the discussion of *tyriB]*.

followed by a discussion of the relevant verses. Those Psalms that have already been considered in the process of looking at the Davidic covenant (Psalms 89 and 132) and the Chronicler's history (Psalm 105) have not been included again. If not stated otherwise, verse numbering follows the MT.

4.2.1. Psalm 25

The word $\text{tyr}i\text{b}$] first occurs in Psalm 25, in verses 10 and 14. Psalm 25 is an acrostic Psalm, though the Hebrew text shows some deviations (verse 5, line 2 begins with a instead of w , and both verses 18 and 19 begin with r). Kraus (1978:351) considers this Psalm as a 'prayer song' (*Gebetslied*), whose original *Sitz im Leben* is difficult, if not impossible to determine. Weiser (1986:238) on the other hand regards it as a 'lamentation of a pensive soul earnest in its piety' and thinks it was recited in the cult of the Covenant Festival. The general tone of the Psalm is one of trust in Yahweh's help and a call for deliverance from both sin and enemies. I am not sure whether one can ascribe as many Psalms as Weiser does to a Covenant Festival (which may or may not have existed in Israel). While there is some lamentation (verses 17-19), I think Kraus is perhaps closer in his description of the Psalm as a 'prayer song.'

Verses 8-15 seem to be general statements about the ways of the Lord and his dealings with men. Weiser (1986:238) notes they are taking the form of Wisdom sayings. These verses can again be subdivided into two sections, verses 8-10 and verses 11-15. It is in these sections that the two references to $\text{tyr}i\text{b}$] occur, namely in verse 10 and 14. Verses 8-10 contain three successive statements that elaborate on the goodness of God in instructing sinners in his ways. It seems to me that while the first line (verse 8) speaks about sinners, this word is then further qualified in verses 9 and 10 as 'the humble' and 'those who keep God's covenant and testimonies.' In other words, the sinner (at least in this context) is a person willing to be taught by God, humble (admitting he is a sinner) but not perfect before him.

The phrase $\text{wyt} ; \text{d}\bar{o}[\text{ew}\bar{\text{O}} / \text{tyr}i\text{b}]$ is very likely a hendiadys, as NIV translates it ('the demands of his covenant', c f Anderson 1981:210), rather than two successive statements, as in NKJV (his covenant and his testimonies). Thus, AA Anderson (1981:210) is probably right in paraphrasing Psalm 25:10: 'All the dealings of Yahweh (with his people) are characterized (as seen in the salvation-history) by a loyalty to his Covenant promises and by an absolute trustworthiness.' The covenant referred to in this case is most likely the Sinai covenant, which I think is indicated by the addition of $\text{wyt} ; \text{d}\bar{o}[\text{ew}\bar{\text{O}}$ and the fact that it is those who 'keep' it for whom God's ways are always $\text{tm}, \text{a}\hat{\text{O}}\text{w} < \text{ds}, \text{j}, ,$.

$\text{ds}, \text{j}, ,$ has been described as *das zwischen einem Herrn und seinen Leuten herrschende Verhältnis des Wohlwollens und der Bundesgemäßheit* (Buber, cited in Kraus 1978:178). It is a word that is often used together with covenant, and is actually rather difficult to translate - 'covenant loyalty' is only one way to express some of its rich meaning. Glueck (1967:48) notes

that the ‘concept of duty is very closely related to *esed*...[It] was the relationship among people who formed a fellowship which required the fulfillment of mutual responsibilities.’ A little later he summarises his findings. Among other things he states that ‘*esed* corresponds to the demands of loyalty and includes the concept of *’emeth*. The phrase $\text{t}\bar{\text{m}}\bar{\text{a}}\ \bar{\text{d}}\bar{\text{s}}\bar{\text{j}}$ is then to be regarded as a hendiadys in which $\text{t}\bar{\text{m}}\bar{\text{a}}$ is an explanatory adjective....’ He then adds that ‘*esed* constitutes the essence of a covenant’ (Glueck 1967:55). He also emphasises again that wherever ‘*esed* appears together with *’emeth* or *’emunah*, the quality of loyalty inherent in the concept *esed* is emphasized’ (Glueck 1967:72). In covenant contexts, *esed* means a particular kind of loyalty, namely conforming to and fulfilling the conditions of the covenant (Glueck 1967:73).

I think this little excursus on the meaning of $\bar{\text{d}}\bar{\text{s}}\bar{\text{j}}$ shows that in all likelihood the $\text{t}\bar{\text{y}}\bar{\text{r}}\bar{\text{i}}\bar{\text{b}}]$ referred to in Psalm 25:10 is the Sinai covenant. The Psalmist (and other believers) have kept it and so he is included among those for whom ‘the ways of the Lord are loving and faithful’, even if he does not quite understand them. Weiser (1986:240) rightly relates the confidence and comfort of this statement to Paul’s saying in Romans 8:28: ‘We know that all things work together for good to those who love God’ (NKJV).

Psalm 25:12-14 forms a unit, in which the Psalmist recounts the blessings of those who fear God. In verse 12 they are instructed in the Lord’s way, in verse 13 they are promised prosperity and the inheritance of the land, and in verse 14 they are promised that ‘God confides in those who fear him ($\text{w}\bar{\text{y}}\bar{\text{a}};\bar{\text{r}}\bar{\text{e}}\bar{\text{y}}\bar{\text{l}}\bar{\text{i}}\ \bar{\text{h}}\bar{\text{w}};\bar{\text{h}}\bar{\text{y}}\bar{\text{d}}\ \bar{\text{d}}/\bar{\text{s}}$), and makes his covenant known to them ($\text{u}[\bar{\text{y}}\bar{\text{d}}\bar{\text{i}}/\bar{\text{h}}\bar{\text{l}}] / \text{t}\bar{\text{y}}\bar{\text{r}}\bar{\text{i}}\bar{\text{b}}]\bar{\text{w}}$)’ (NIV). Verses 12 and 14 form a kind of inclusio, whereby the physical blessings promised in verse 13 (prosperity, land) are bracketed by spiritual ones (instruction, knowing God’s counsel). I would even go so far as to say that the last verse is the highlight of these three verses and the promises contained in them. In actual fact, the person who fears Yahweh is promised the closest possible relationship with his God: Yahweh himself will confide in him (tell him his secrets, NKJV), or, in more old-fashioned language, the believer will stand ‘in God’s counsel’.

In this verse the terms $\bar{\text{d}}/\bar{\text{s}}$ and $\text{t}\bar{\text{y}}\bar{\text{r}}\bar{\text{i}}\bar{\text{b}}]$ form a parallelism. Therefore it is difficult to argue what exactly is meant by $\text{t}\bar{\text{y}}\bar{\text{r}}\bar{\text{i}}\bar{\text{b}}]$ here. Kraus (1978:354) remarks: *Eigentümlich ist der Parallelismus hwhy dws - wtyrb. Beide Begriffe liegen im Kraftfeld der Offenbarung des Jrd. D/s hat darum die Bedeutung: “wegweisender Ratschluß”.... Und tȳriḇ] ist die “wegweisende Willensäußerung des Gottesbundes”....* Thus, $\text{t}\bar{\text{y}}\bar{\text{r}}\bar{\text{i}}\bar{\text{b}}]$ is not in this case a pact, agreement or even covenant in the ordinary sense of the word, but Yahweh’s express intention to show man his will and purpose. While this will certainly entail a knowledge of the rules and stipulations of Yahweh as he made them known in the Sinai covenant and on other occasions, I think it means much more than this in Psalm 25:14, namely an intimate relationship between Yahweh and the worshipper (cf also the interesting exposition of Sclater 1955:139).

4.2.2. Psalm 44

Psalm 44 has been classified as a communal lament (Anderson 1981:336) or a prayer song (Kraus 1978:480). The division of the Psalm differs from commentator to commentator. The Hebrew seems to indicate section breaks after verse 9 and verse 17 (because of the slight indentations of the text in BHS). Anderson (1981:337) divides it into three sections, according to the English version, namely verses 1-3, which contain a hymn-like description of the mighty acts of God, followed by verses 4-8 which express confidence in God, and lastly verses 9-26, which consist of the actual lament. The speaker is sometimes the whole congregation, sometimes an individual, and it is debatable who that individual is. It may be the king, or the leader of the army (Weiser 1986:355).

The date of the Psalm is also debatable. Some of the church fathers as well as a number of modern interpreters have considered it to be Maccabean in origin, but others, rightly I think, note that though it may have been recited in that era, there is actually no trace of it in the content of the Psalm. Weiser (1986:355) would not exclude a pre-exilic date, but admits that it is actually impossible to fix the exact date of the Psalm. Kraus (1978:481) notes that one is perhaps asking the wrong question in wanting to date this, or for that matter any, Psalm exactly. Most of them have undergone several stages of development, and show both archaic features and signs of modernisation for present generations. Kraus (1978:481) therefore rightly cautions against 'historical fixations' and advises a certain openness with regard to the tradition-history behind the different Psalms.

For this study, the important part of the Psalm is the lament in verses 10-27. In verses 10-17, the people complain that God had forsaken them, given them over to their enemies, and dishonoured them before the nations. In verse 18 they then put forward their claim that all this had happened to them despite the fact that they had 'not forgotten You, nor have we dealt falsely with Your covenant' (NKJV; $\delta\tau, \gamma\rho\iota\beta]B\iota \text{ Wnr}]Q'viAal\zeta w\tilde{\omicron}$). Verses 19-20 continue this argument: the people had not turned back from following God ($\text{WnBeli } r/ja; g/sn:Aal\zeta$) or departed from his ways, and they feel unjustly treated in that God nevertheless had 'broken' them ($\text{Wnt}; yKidi \text{ } yKi$) and covered them 'with the shadow of death' (NKJV; $\text{tw}<m;l]x'b] \text{ Wnyle[; } sk'T]w$). The reasoning reminds us of Job, who also lamented that he had been unjustly treated by God.

The people cannot understand how God could punish them, yet they had done all they could to keep their part of the covenant duties (Weiser 1986:358-359, Anderson 1981:343). It is not specified which covenant the community refers to, but it is reasonable to assume that it is the Sinai covenant that is in mind. The words used by the community to state their faithfulness are interesting. They had 'not forgotten' ($\delta\text{Wnj}]k'v] \text{ } al\zeta w\tilde{\omicron}$) God, neither had they been 'false' to God's covenant (NIV, $\delta\tau, \gamma\rho\iota\beta]B\iota \text{ Wnr}]Q'viAal\zeta w\tilde{\omicron}$) nor had they 'turned back' from following God ($r/ja; g/sn:Aal\zeta \text{ WnBeli}$). The commentator of the Spirit Filled Life Bible (p. 792, on Ps 44:24) makes an interesting remark in noting that to

forget in Hebrew thought was to be inactive. If this is correct, then the people say in effect that they had not been inactive in following God's ways, but always striven to do what he commanded.

The verb in the phrase $\delta\tau, \gamma\text{rib}]Bi \text{ Wnr}]Q' \text{ viAal} \zeta w\tilde{\text{O}}$ is very rare,⁷¹ though the noun $\text{r}\mathfrak{q}, \text{v}$, is quite common. Carpenter & Grisanti (1997:248) note, rightly I think, that the root 'is tied to the world of false behaviour and words, of deception and deceit in dealing with things they way they are as defined by God's character, words, and deeds.' A clue to the meaning of the verb in the context of Psalm 44 is I think given in verse 20, where the people say that if they had indeed dealt treacherously with God's covenant by forgetting his name or worshipping other gods, God would have known it. Thus, dealing 'deceitfully with God's covenant' in verse 18 may quite safely be interpreted as idolatry. In other words, the covenant referred to in verse 18 seems to be the Sinai covenant, but perhaps even more specifically the commandment not to worship other gods.

4.2.3. Psalm 50

The theme of Psalm 50 is the meaning of true worship (Anderson 1986:381, heading of this Psalm). Its form resembles that of divine utterances in prophetic speeches, which is why it has been described as 'prophetic liturgy' (Anderson 1986:381). Its *Sitz im Leben* was obviously the cult, probably in the context of a covenant renewal ceremony (Kidner 1973:186).⁷² Weiser (1986:393) thinks its setting was in the Covenant Festival at the place where Yahweh appeared before the people to judge them and reveal his salvation to them. Commentators also differ about the dating of the Psalm, whether pre-exilic (perhaps during the reforms of Hezekiah or Josiah) or post-exilic (a levitical speech in the character of the Chronicler's speeches: Kraus 1978:529-30). It is difficult to make a decision one way or the other, but I shall adopt the pre-exilic date here, though one cannot be dogmatic.

The Hebrew text of Psalm 50 shows three divisions, namely verses 1-6, 7-15, and 16-23. In verses 1-6 we have the description of a theophany (Kraus 1978:530), reminiscent of the theophany at Mt Sinai (Kidner 1973:186). The beginning of verse 3 ($\text{vr}' \text{ j}\tilde{\text{O}}\text{y} < \text{Ala}' \text{ w}\tilde{\text{O}} \text{ Wnyhel} \zeta \text{ a}\tilde{\text{O}}$ a boy ;) may be translated either: 'Our God will come and not be silent,' or: 'Let our God come, and let him not be silent'. Verse 4 is a call to the heavens and the earth to be witnesses (Kraus 1978:531) that God will judge *his* people. They are described in verse 5, as his 'saints' ($\text{y}\tilde{\text{d}}; \text{y}\text{si} \text{ j}$) and as 'those who made a covenant with me by sacrifice' (NIV; $\text{j}\text{b}' \text{ z}\tilde{\text{E}} \text{ Ayle} \{ \} \text{ ytiyrib} \} \text{ yter} \} \text{ Ko}$). In other words, the people to be judged are not the nations, as might have been expected at first, but God's own people. If verse 3 is translated 'Let our God come...', it would be a total shock for God's people that they, who called for God's

⁷¹ In fact, $\text{r}\mathfrak{q}\text{v}$ as a verb only occurs 6 times in the Old Testament, 5 times in the Piel stem, of which two occurrences are in the Psalms (here, and in Ps 89:34) (c f Carpenter & Grisanti 1997:247). In all these occurrences the verb is in the negative, i.e. expresses something *not* done by the person who says it (or, in the case of Lv 19:11, a negative command). The noun occurs however quite frequently (113 times, c f Carpenter & Grisanti 1997:248).

⁷² This is however debatable. See Kraus (1978:527-529) for a discussion of the *Sitz im Leben* of Psalm 50.

judgement (on other nations), are actually the accused! If that is the right interpretation, the impact would certainly be similar to that of Amos' indictment in Amos 3:2 (c f Kidner 1973:186).

The words $\text{jb}'z\acute{E}Ayle[\} \text{ytiyrib] yter]Ko}$ seem to refer to Exodus 24:6-8, and perhaps even to a covenant ceremony accompanied by this psalm (c f Anderson 1986:384). Kraus (1978:532) astutely asks: *'Muß man an dieser Stelle nicht annehmen, daß (beim Opfer) ein Akt kultischer Bundeserneuerung stattfand?'* It is conceivable that either before or after the recitation of the psalm a sacrifice was made. But perhaps the significance of these words is actually more related to the following indictment by God in the Psalm.

The choice of words in the phrase $\text{jb}'z\acute{E}Ayle[\} \text{ytiyrib] yter]Ko}$ is quite striking. tyrib] is again coupled with trk , but in this case as a nominal phrase. Still, I think because of the connection with the word 'sacrifice', the reference is to a particular ceremony. This may be the ancient custom of parting the sacrificial animals in half and having the participants of the covenant ceremony pass through them, as is indicated in Genesis 15:9-21 and Jeremiah 34:18, or it may refer to the actual sacrifice in the ceremony at which the Psalm was recited.

The importance of the word $\text{jb}'z\acute{E}$ (sacrifice) must also not be underestimated. Perhaps scholars who see this phrase as an ironical reference are not too far off the mark, considering the speech in verses 7-15. The people seemed to be proud of themselves for making a 'covenant by sacrifice'. But God was actually not at all impressed with their sacrifices. Outward performance of ritual does not give the worshipper any credit in the eyes of God.⁷³ What counts before him is a true spirit. Sacrifice is not merely the killing of animals in some ritual, but the giving of thanks to God, and fulfilling of vows to him (verse 14).⁷⁴ If they do what they have promised both God and their neighbours, then God will hear their cries for help and save them, and they will have reason to glorify him (verse 15).

The last section of the Psalm, verses 16-23, reiterates this point. There are some people, called 'wicked',⁷⁵ who think it is sufficient to recite God's laws ($\text{yQ; ju rPes 'l] \acute{o}L]Ahm'}$)⁷⁶

⁷³ Kraus (1978:533-534) rightly points out the obviously magic perceptions that had entered into the minds of the sacrificing community. He also observes that this is not a polemic against the sacrificial cult per se, but against the idea that regarded sacrifices as the food of the deity, and I agree with him (Kraus 1978:534). Similar arguments are brought forward by Weiser (1986:396-397). He remarks that it was proper respect for God that the worshippers lacked and it was this that the Psalmist castigated them for. This true attitude of worship required is very close to the New Testament demand that God be worshipped in Spirit and in Truth (John 4:24; c f Weiser 1986:398).

⁷⁴ One cannot help but remember the incident in Jeremiah 34, where Jeremiah castigates the inhabitants of Jerusalem that they had broken their covenant with their slaves whom they had set free, but later took back their oath and enslaved them again. It may well be that Psalm 50:14-55 was used to address those people.

⁷⁵ Many scholars regard the phrase $\text{yhyil; a\acute{o} rm'a; [v;r;l;w\acute{o}}$ as a gloss (so BHS in note a-a to verse 16, Kraus 1978:527). If this is so, it would make the following indictments even more pertinent, since the addressees then would still be the people of God gathered for worship.

⁷⁶ Kraus (1978:535) thinks the reference in verse 16 may be to a custom of recitation of the laws of God, in particular the Decalogue.

and always talk about his covenant (ὄπιAyle[} ytiyrib] aC:Tiw"),⁷⁷ but their lifestyles and attitudes show they are actually not at all inclined to live accordingly (verses 18-20). For the significance of the word ytiyrib] in this context it is important to note that it is parallel to yQ;ju⁷⁸ but also to rs;Wm and yr'b;D] in verse 17. In other words, tyriB] signifies certain stipulations and regulations, presumably the Sinai covenant. The context also shows that the worshipper was expected to keep and obey these commandments, as is evident from the accusations in verses 18-19. More than mere head-knowledge was required - the worshipper was to act on his knowledge.

The Psalm concludes with a statement that those who do follow God's advise to offer him thanks instead of outward ritual and who therefore put their ways right with God will see the salvation they long for.

4.2.4. Psalm 55

Psalm 55 is an individual lament which divides into two unequal sections: verses 1-20a and verses 20b-24. Text and content are difficult as evidenced by different opinions among commentators. Kraus (1978:561) for example considers the Psalm as a combination of originally two poems that have been grouped together.⁷⁹ Weiser (1986:419) on the other hand prefers to consider the Psalm as a unit, whereby the Psalmist goes through 'swift and disconnected change[s] of thoughts and moods' which leads to a consequent lack of a steady train of thought (c f also Anderson 1981:412). This seems quite an acceptable proposal.

For the purposes of this study, verses 21-22 are most relevant. The Psalmist complains about the treachery of a close friend in striking terms. Whoever it is who attacks him, he has 'put forth his hands against those who were at peace with him' (NKJV, wym;lzv]Bi wyd;y:jl'v;), and he has 'broken his covenant' (NKJV, /tyriB] lLeji).⁸⁰ The tyriB] here is not one of the covenants between Yahweh and man, but an agreement between humans, maybe a non-aggression pact. However, I think the context favours a friendship pact similar to that between David and Jonathan. NEB's rendering 'promised word' is therefore quite acceptable. The word lLeji is often used in the context of ritual defilement. In the context of a friendship

⁷⁷ Weiser (1986:398) notes that this section of the Psalm is obviously directed against people who merely had a head-knowledge of the commandments through rote learning and reciting them, which was a symptom of superficial religion.

⁷⁸ Kraus (1978:535) considers this parallelism as typical of deuteronomistic thought.

⁷⁹ Kraus (1978:559-560) proposes some changes to the MT of verse 20, but I fail to be convinced by them since there is little manuscript evidence to support these emendations. The reading '*Ismael und Jaalam und die Bewohner*' seems to be supported by LXX and Syriac, but the proposed change of '*Selah*' to '*insgesamt*', as suggested by de Boer, editor of Psalms in BHS, (and Ehrlich, cited by Kraus 1978:560) has no manuscript evidence in BHS. Therefore, I prefer to read the unchanged text, as do NKJV and NIV and other English translations, despite the difficulties that remain in the second half of the verse.

⁸⁰ NEB translates verses 20-21 '...like Ishmael and the desert tribes and those who dwell in the East, who have no respect for an oath nor any fear of God. Such men do violence to those at peace with them and break their promised word,' thus adopting a similar reading for verse 20-21 (Eng. 19-20) as Kraus.

between human beings, it seems to indicate a violation of the trust that existed between the people concerned. Here, the Psalmist's companion pretended to be a friend, while his real intentions were to destroy him.

The Psalm closes with an expression of trust, not in human beings, but in God, who will deliver the Psalmist through his troubles and give his enemies what they deserve.

4.2.5. Psalm 74

Psalm 74 is a community lament, bewailing the destruction of the temple. Though it is, I think, most likely that this refers to the destruction of the first temple by the Babylonians in 587/6 BCE, alternative proposals have been made. For example, some scholars think of the desecration of the second temple by Antiochus IV in 168 BC or another event no longer known to us between those two dates (c f Anderson 1981:538, Weiser 1986:518).

The Psalm starts with a general lament over the destruction of the temple and apparently also other sanctuaries (verse 8). Verses 9-17 tell of the great works of God, who is powerful even over creation. In verses 18-21 the Psalmist reverts to his lament and calls upon Yahweh to remember the destruction the enemy has wrought upon the land. He calls for deliverance and asks God particularly to 'have respect to the covenant' (NKJV, *tyriBll' fBeh'*).⁸¹ The definite article 'the' shows that a particular covenant is in view, and it is reasonable to presume that the Sinai covenant, and by extension perhaps even the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants. If this is the case, it may mean a reference to the promise to keep the dynasty of David and the temple as God's dwelling place forever. The implication seems to be a call on Yahweh to be as true to his promises as the Psalmist has been to his. However, this is of course conjecture.

4.2.6. Psalm 78

Psalm 78 is a '*Geschichtspсалm*' (Kraus 1978:702), a recounting of the history of Israel, probably for instructive purposes. Yet it is also called 'a riddle' (verse 2, *ypī lvm; b] h j ; T] p] a ,*), a designation that has caused a few questions among scholars (e g Kraus 1978:703). I am inclined to take the word *lvm;* here as simply a stylistic variation for *lyKic]m'* without putting too much emphasis on the aspect of 'riddle' the word may have in other contexts. Wilcock (2001:26) however astutely remarks that maybe the purpose of the 'riddle' is similar to that of Jesus' parables (c f Mt 13:35): for those who were willing to listen, its teaching would make sense, but for others it would just remain 'a riddle'. The dating of the Psalm has also been a matter of debate.⁸² I would prefer an early date, because there is no mention of the fall of Samaria, but one cannot be dogmatic.

⁸¹ LXX and Syriac actually read 'your covenant'.

⁸² Kraus (1978:703-705) discusses the issue from various standpoints. He considers the deuteronomic influence as quite considerable. Day (1986:8-12) however argues for a pre-deuteronomic date, especially since there is no mention of the fall of Samaria in 722/1 BCE or the resulting exile.

The Psalmist gives a rather long introduction (verses 1-11),⁸³ before he finally embarks on the description of Israel's history. The beginning of the Psalm (verses 1-2) is similar to that typical of wisdom literature, with a call to the hearers to listen to 'his Torah'⁸⁴ and 'his words'. In verses 5-8 the Psalmist notes that the purpose of giving the law was that the people would teach their children to keep it and not be stubborn like their forefathers, who 'had not set their hearts aright' (ִּיִּכְיִהֶֽאֱלֹהִים / בְּלִי) nor had their spirits been 'faithful to God' (/ ךְּ־לֵאֱתָא, חֲנֻמָּא, נֹאֱלֹהִים) (verse 8, NKJV). The same sentiments are expressed in different ways throughout the Psalm. The contrast between God's faithfulness and care for his people and the people's fickleness and unwillingness to trust him is thus highlighted in stark terms.

The two occurrences of the word *tyriB*] in Psalm 78 both are couched in negative terms, expressing the view that Israel had failed to keep the covenant. In verses 9-11 we encounter the word *tyriB*] for the first time. Ephraim, the northern tribe, had turned away from battle, which Weiser (1986:540) interprets not as the fall of the Northern Kingdom but as the battle where Saul met his death (cf. 1 Sm 31). Despite all the things their fathers had experienced with God (to be outlined from verse 12 onward), they 'did not keep the covenant of God' (verse 10; NKJV, *muhilzaô tyriB*] *Wrm]v; alç*) but 'refused to walk in His law' (*çk, l, l; Wna}me / tr; / tb]W*) and forgot 'his works' (*wyt; / lyli[} WjK]v]YIw*") and 'his wonders' (*wyt; / al]p]nIwô*).

The words *hr; / t* and *tyriB*] in verse 10 are parallel. Kraus (1978:707) rightly remarks that the *hr; / t* which Yahweh established in Israel (v 5) is his *tyriB*] (v 10). He explains: '*Gemeint ist die grundlegende, das Verhältnis Gottes zu seinem Volk tragende Heils- und Gehorsamsordnung*' (Kraus 1978:707, emphasis added). In other words, the Sinai *tyriB*] with all its rules and regulations is the covenant referred to in this Psalm, both in verse 10 and in verse 37. What is also important is Kraus' observation that a *relationship* is in view. The covenant was not mere rules and regulations for their own sake, but it was given to ensure a continued and proper relationship between Yahweh and his people. The Psalm was composed to encourage and warn the people who heard it not to be as stubborn and rebellious as the people of whom he was going to tell them, but instead to ensure they entered into a right relationship with God. From verse 12 onward, the Psalmist outlines in the starkest terms the fact that the ancestors of his audience had continuously and wilfully refused to obey the covenant of God.

⁸³ This is the division followed by Kraus (1978:705). Other divisions are possible, and it seems MT makes a break after verse 8 (though no paragraph division is indicated). Weiser (1986:538-540) treats verses 1-8 separately, followed by 9-11, 12-16 etc. Kidner (1975:281-286) divides the Psalm into the following sections: 1-8, 9-16, 17-31, 32-39, 40-53, 54-64, 65-72 (except for the last three, the same divisions are indicated in the printed version of BHS - the last three sections there are 40-55, 56-64, 65-72).

⁸⁴ Kraus (1978:705) wants to differentiate between *ytir; / T* in verse 1 (which he thinks is the teaching of the wisdom teacher, not the law of the Lord) and *hr; / t* verse 5 (which is in his opinion the law of the Lord). However, it seems to me that this is more a hair-splitting exercise than a real difference.

In verse 37 there is another reference to the covenant. Before this verse, the Psalmist complains that despite all the miracles the people of Israel had seen God work in the wilderness, after leading them out of Egypt, they still did not believe in God's works. On the contrary, only when they faced hardships, they sought God, but even then they 'flattered him with their mouth' and 'lied to him with their tongue' (NKJV). All this was because the people's heart 'was not steadfast with Him (/M[i ÷/kn:Aalç µB;liwō), nor were they faithful in his covenant' (NKJV, /tyrib]Bi Wnm]a,n< alçwō). The repentance of verse 34 ('they returned and sought earnestly for God,' NKJV, Wbv;wō WhWvr;d]W laeAWrj}viwō) turned out to be insincere. They remembered that God was their rock (v 35, NKJV, µr;Wx µyhilçaōAyKi WrK]zōYIw"), but their remembrance was not coupled with a life-style that showed a true change of heart (c f Kraus 1978:710). It was, as Weiser (1986:541) observes, 'but a passing mood which quickly disappeared (cf. Hos 6.4) or a pious self-deception which spent itself in a superficial lip-service and in the observance of cultic rites (cf. Isa. 29.13) without involving a change of heart.'

It is interesting how the wording in verse 37 is similar to that of verse 8. The same verbs (÷/kn:, Wnm]a,n< alç) are used to express Israel's fickleness and unfaithfulness. Faithfulness to God (verse 8) is the same as faithfulness to his covenant (verse 37), therefore to retain the relationship with God the people were required to keep the rules and regulations he had given them. Fortunately for them, Yahweh was not as fickle as they were, but 'being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity' (v 38, NKJV).

4.2.7. Psalm 103

Kraus (1978:871-872), rightly I think, describes Psalm 103 as a 'Dankhymnus' ('Thank-you hymn') of an individual, which he dates into the post-exilic period due to Aramaic suffix forms. The Psalmist opens his song with a call to himself to give praise for God's goodness, and continues to list the things God has done for him as well as for the community. The whole Psalm in fact looks at Yahweh's covenant loyalty, but the word tyrib] is only mentioned once, in verse 18.⁸⁵

In verse 17 and 18 the Psalmist then notes that despite human frailty, Yahweh shows everlasting mercy (µl; / [Ad['wō µl; / [me hw:hyō ds, j, wō) to those who fear him and keep his covenant (/tyrib] yrem]vol]). One cannot escape the contrast between the everlasting nature and faithfulness of Yahweh, and human fickleness and transitoriness in these verses. As so often, ds j is coupled with tyrib] in this context. The expressions 'those who fear him' and 'such as keep his covenant' (NKJV) seem to be parallel. In other words, to fear God means to keep his covenant. And to keep his covenant means to remember (rkz) his

⁸⁵ Anderson (1981:714) aptly heads his commentary section on verses 6-18 'Yahweh's covenant loyalty.'

commandments (wyd ; Qupí) and *to do them* (μτ ; / c [] l ' ; verse 18). Remembering in this context, as generally in the Old Testament, is thus not just an intellectual exercise. Neither does it mean that the thing being remembered has previously been forgotten. On the contrary, it is a constant exercise of memorising and learning which always leads to appropriate action (c f above on 1 Chr 16).

Which t̄yriB] is in view in this Psalm is difficult to say, but since commandments are mentioned it is reasonable to assume that the Sinai covenant is meant. However, one cannot be dogmatic.

4.2.8. Psalm 105

Psalm 105 has been considered above in the treatment of 1 Chronicles 16. Thus, a few remarks may suffice here. The Psalm retells the history of Israel, but is probably less a didactic poem than a cultic hymn (Kraus 1978:891; Weiser (1986:673). In verses 7-11 the Psalmist recounts the t̄yriB] that Yahweh had made (τρκ) with Abraham and Isaac, the word (x̄b ; d̄ ;) which he commanded for a thousand generations, in other words, forever, as is also expressed in verse 10. Kraus (1978:893) rightly observes that the phrase q̄jōl]... h ; d̄ , ymi [} Y " w " in verse 10 in all likelihood points to the custom of writing down the terms of the covenant after its ratification by oath. The content of the t̄yriB] concerns the promise of the land, and the Psalm continues from verse 12 onwards to show how this promise had been fulfilled.

4.2.9. Psalm 106

Psalm 106 is another historical Psalm, and stands besides Psalms 78 (see above), 105 and 136. Von Rad (1972:271) notes that '[t]he form of "historical summaries", that is, fairly short or fairly detailed recapitulations of Yahweh's dealings with Israel, had a long history in Israel. It is not, then, surprising that...such historical summaries could be drawn up from very different perspectives. Ps. 105 narrates the history of Israel from quite different points of view from those of Ps. 106.' Kraus (1978:899) quotes these lines from the German version of von Rad's book, but adds that while these observations are certainly correct it is not the only way to understand Psalm 106. He rightly observes that the theme of the whole piece is 'Yahweh's grace and Israel's guilt'. Weiser (1986:679) links this Psalm and Psalm 105 to the autumn festival and its tradition of *Heilsgeschichte*. He considers Psalm 106 as a national penitential lament (Weiser 1986:679), which was probably sung by the Levites in recitation of the sins of Israel. Both Psalm 105 and Psalm 106 may have been used in the same covenant liturgy (Weiser 1986:680).⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Weiser has an interesting reference to the covenant renewal ceremonies of the Qumran community as it is apparent in the Manual of Discipline, col. 1:18-2:1 (c f Garcia Martinez 1996:3-4; Garcia Martinez calls this document 1QRule of the Community). Weiser argues that the difference in outlook compared to the similarity of outline in Psalms 105 and 106 can be explained in the light of these rules, which contain amongst others recitals by the priests of God's saving deeds and recitals by the Levites of the sins of Israel. These two features seem in his opinion to make up Psalms 105 and 106 respectively.

Psalm 106 retells the history of Israel from the exodus from Egypt to their entrance into Canaan, the conquest of the land and their occupation in it (verses 6-43), with an emphasis on the manifold failures of the nation to comply with the rules of Yahweh that he had given them. Yet, despite all their failures, Yahweh was mindful of their afflictions and heard their cry for help (verse 44). He remembered his covenant for their sake (c f NKJV, /tyriB] μh,l; rKozōYIw") and had compassion on them according to the multitude of his mercies w̄d̄i:s; j} broK] μj̄eN:YIw"). Here it is Yahweh who remembers his covenant, and acts upon it (see above). Note again also the combination of tyriB] and d̄s, j, . Since the remainder of the Psalm deals with Israel's failure to keep God's laws, or covenant, it is clear that the Sinai covenant is meant here. Yet, it also has to be seen in connection with the Abrahamic covenant, which Yahweh remembered in Exodus 2:24-25 and which subsequently led to the Exodus and the covenant at Mt Sinai.

4.2.10. Psalm 111

Psalm 111 is the second-last Psalm in which the word tyriB] occurs.⁸⁷ It is an acrostic, in which each half line starts with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and a song or hymn of thanksgiving. Kraus (1978:940) thinks it is of exilic or post-exilic origin since the feature of acrostic only came to be used then. Weiser (1986:698) on the other hand notes that despite the use of a theme of wisdom literature in verse 10, it is by no means certain that the Psalm should be dated so late.

The word tyriB] occurs twice in the Psalm, in verses 5 and 9. In each case it is linked to the word 'forever' (μl; / [l]). In other words, one of the everlasting covenants is in view, which points either to the Abrahamic (Gn 17) or (less likely, I think) to the Davidic covenant (2 Sm 7, Ps 89). However, there may be even a hint at the Sinai covenant, whose Sabbath law was termed 'a covenant forever' in Exodus 34:16.⁸⁸

Scholars have been weary to detect any parallelism in the Psalm. Kraus (1978:90) for example says: *'Ein Parallelismus Membrorum der üblichen Form ist nicht festzustellen.'* However, I think that there are a few instances where one might at least speak of an attempt at parallelism. For example, it seems that verses 5 and 6 could be considered parallel. I would propose a structure as follows (NIV translation):

He provides food for those who fear him;	(wya;reyli
÷t'n: ¹r, f,)	

⁸⁷ The last one discussed in this section, since Psalm 132 has already been considered above when looking at the Davidic covenant.

⁸⁸ If one considers the phrase 'for a thousand generations' as another expression for 'forever', then the everlasting nature of the covenant at Sinai is evident even from the Ten Commandments (c f Dt 5:10, but also 7:9).

he remembers his covenant forever. (/tyriB]
 μl;/[l] rKozōyI)
 He has shown his people the power of his works, (/M['l] dyGIhi
 wyc;[}m' j'KO)
 giving them the lands of other nations. (μyI/G
 tl'j}n" μh,l; ttel;)

Set out in this way, it is obvious that the covenant spoken of is the promise of land, given to Abraham and his descendants (e.g. Gn 15:18-20, 17:8; 26:1-5 etc), and also to Israel at Mt Sinai (Ex 23:20-33). Kraus (1978:942) rightly observes that in Psalm 111 the Sinai and Conquest traditions are closely interwoven. Anderson (1981:774) comments on verse 5 that tyriB] here probably means 'covenant promises'. Note again that the act of remembering is accompanied by action on the part of God, both in showing the people his power, and by giving them the land.

Unfortunately, verses 7-9 do not readily lend themselves to a similar structure. However, it is quite interesting to note that the last vowel sound in each stich of verses 7-8 is long â, while the last vowel sound in each stich in verse 9 is long ô. The following is an attempt to set out verses 7-9 in a logical fashion, which should by no means be taken as definitive. The reasoning behind this layout is the occurrence of the words tma and μl;/[l] (with the exception of 9a and c).

The works of his hands are faithful and just; fP;v]miW tm,aô
 wyd;y: yce[}m'
 all his precepts are trustworthy. wyd;WQPiAlK;
 μynIm;aôn<
 They are steadfast for ever and ever, μl;/[l] d['l;
 μykiWms]
 done in faithfulness and uprightness. rv;y:wô
 tm,aôB, μyIWc[}
 He provided redemption for his people; /M['l] jl'v;
 tWdP]
 he ordained his covenant forever— /tyriB]
 μl;/[l]AhW:xi
 holy and awesome is his name. /mv] ar;/nwô v/dq;

If this structure is accepted, the covenant in verse 9 is parallel to the precepts of God. Both are everlasting, and, by implication, trustworthy. It is also said that the covenant is commanded, which means that there must be some stipulations in view that can be kept - the precepts. Anderson (1981:775) astutely observes the connection between covenant and Ancient Near Eastern vassal treaties. The latter were given by the suzerain to the vassal, and disobedience was tantamount to treason and rebellion. In the same way, Yahweh had commanded his covenant to the people of

Israel and demanded their obedience and allegiance to him. Thus I think that the *tyriB]* in question is the Sinai covenant.

4.3. *tyriB]* in Proverbs

The reference in Proverbs 2:17 is the only occurrence of the word *tyriB]* in this book. It comes in the context of a section that warns the believer from the crooked ways of the wicked, and in particular the immoral woman and adulteress. She is said to have 'left the partner of her youth and ignored the covenant she made before God' (NIV, *h;kev; h;yh,l;aô tyriB]Ata,*). It seems obvious that in this instance the *tyriB]* is the marriage vow. However, Ross (on Prov 2:16-19) mentions the possibility that *tyriB]* could refer to the prohibition of adultery in Exodus 20:14. Similarly, Kidner (1964:62) says that '[t]he wording of the phrase [the covenant of her God] is against its referring merely to a marriage covenant as in Malachi 2:14.'

There are only two other scriptures in the Old Testament that explicitly refer to marriage as a covenant, namely Malachi 2:14 and Ezekiel 16:8, both of which I have discussed in another article (see Linington 2002b). Here it is sufficient to note that according to the theology of Proverbs 2:17, marriage, as a covenant, does not merely entail the two partners, but also God. While it seems obvious that the marriage covenant included mutual obligations by husband and wife, it seems that the most important aspect of the procedure was to establish a relationship between the two people. Therefore, I do not think one can only speak of a 'contract', as de Vaux (1973:33) does. To quote Verhoef (1987:274), 'marriage could be denoted as "a covenant of God" because it is contracted in submission to the revealed will of God (Exod. 20:14) and with the expectation of his blessing (Gen. 1:28)... In a certain sense [God] was present when the marriage was contracted...[and he was the] witness, guarantor, and protector of every legal transaction, [including]...the marriage "contract".' Thus, to forsake the marriage partner is tantamount to forsaking and forgetting God and his covenant, as well as the obligation taken up when concluding the covenant.

4.4. *tyriB]* in Daniel

The word *tyriB]* occurs in Daniel in the following passages: Daniel 9:4, 27; 11:22, 28, 30, 32. Except for the first one, all the other scriptures are found in the context of apocalyptic visions, which most scholars consider as reports of the type *vaticinia ex eventu* (e.g. van der Kooij 1993:497), a view I do not share.⁸⁹ Since the expression *'ds,j,h'wô tyriB]h'*

⁸⁹ Considering the limited scope of this work it is impossible to go into detail. I basically find myself in agreement with the positions of Baldwin (1978, *Commentary on Daniel*, Introduction) and Waltke (1976).

רמנו', used in Daniel 9:4, has already been discussed, I will not elaborate on it anymore, but concentrate on the other occurrences.

4.4.1. Daniel 9

Daniel 9:20-27 is 'one of the most enigmatic passages from the Hebrew Bible' (van der Kooij 1993:496), which tells what will happen during the 'seventy sevens', usually interpreted as seventy seven-year periods. The seventy seven-year periods are divided into three uneven periods of seven, sixty-two and one seven-year period. Verses 26-27 deal with the last of these periods. It states that after the sixty-two weeks an anointed one will be cut off, the people of the leader (or prince) to come will destroy the city and the most holy (place?), and apparently there will be a time of war until the end. The difficult passage containing תַּרְיָב] comes at the beginning of verse 27: 'Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week' (NKJV; מַיְבִיר' ל; תַּרְיָב] רַב־גְּדֻלָּהּ דְּיָא, ['וְבַי;). Other translations vary slightly. RSV for example has, 'He shall make a strong covenant with many for one week', rendering רַב־גְּדֻלָּהּ 'strong', whereas the word תַּרְיָב] is rendered 'treaty' and 'agreement' respectively by the New Living Translation⁹⁰ and the New Century Version.⁹¹ The question that arises is of course what the תַּרְיָב] in this verse refers to, and who (or what) the subject of the word רַב־גְּדֻלָּהּ is (cf van der Kooij 1993:496-497).

If, as many commentators (e.g. Porteous 1965:143) think, תַּרְיָב] merely refers to a covenant or agreement between Antiochus IV and the renegade Jews, then 'agreement', 'pact' or 'treaty' would certainly be the correct rendering, since a political treaty is in view. However, van der Kooij (1993:496) questions the interpretation of תַּרְיָב] as a political treaty and that of מַיְבִיר' as renegade Jews, because in Daniel 11:33 and 12:3 the same word refers to the multitude of faithful Jews. This may well be so. However, I think that one should first try to make sense of a word in the particular context in which it is used, and only if that does not lead to any satisfactory results, look to other, similar contexts for clarification. Thus תַּרְיָב] (and, for that matter, מַיְבִיר') may well adopt different shades of meaning in the different contexts of Daniel 9 and 11, which is what I have tried to highlight in this study.

A very different proposition is that of Lebram (cited in van der Kooij 1993:496) who suggests the reading: 'Aber stark wird der Bund der Vielen sich eine Jahrwoche lang zeigen.' In other words, the covenant refers to a religious group whose leaders will be strongly opposed to the occupation and desecration of the temple in Jerusalem. The question is however, whether תַּרְיָב] is the subject of the verb רַב־גְּדֻלָּהּ or whether it is not better considered as the object of the sentence. Van der Kooij (1993:497) notes that if the meaning was 'der Bund der Vielen', one

⁹⁰ 'He will make a treaty with the people for a period of one set of seven.'

⁹¹ 'That leader will make firm an agreement with many people for seven years.'

would expect a Hebrew construction like $\mu y B i r ' h ; t y r i B]$, not $\mu y B i r ' l ; t y r i B]$. Thus it seems better to adopt the translation 'He will make strong a covenant for/with the many' (c f van der Kooij 1993:497).

4.4.2. Daniel 11

The four verses in Daniel 11 in which $t y r i B]$ occurs are all in the main section of the prophecy concerning the end-times which lasts from Daniel 11:1-12:4. Daniel 11:20-39 is the section that is most important for this study. This text consists of a prophecy that is usually taken to concern the reign of Antiochus IV. In verse 22, we find a reference to a 'prince of the covenant' (NIV) or 'covenant prince' (New Living Translation) ($t y r i B] d y g I n \bar{O}$). Usually this person is thought to be Onias III, the High Priest deposed in 175 BCE and assassinated in 171 BCE, less likely another secular ruler (c f Baldwin 1978:192). Matthew Henry seems to interpret the phrase as referring to Antiochus IV's nephew, whom he supplanted (see his commentary on Daniel 11:21-45), pretending (covenanting) that he would return the kingdom to him when he returned from Rome. Yet another opinion is that the $t y r i B] d y g I n \bar{O}$ refers to Ptolemy Philometor (Gleason on Dn 11:22). In both cases, $t y r i B]$ in the phrase 'prince of the covenant' would refer to the covenant made between Antiochus and the other human party concerned. However, I think it is more likely that the reference is to Onias, in which case the word $t y r i B]$ in the phrase 'prince of the covenant', would refer to orthodox Jewish religion, while the whole phrase refers to the leader of this movement.

The next three references to $t y r i B]$ in Daniel 11 occur in verses 28 and 30 (twice). In all three cases mention is made of a 'holy covenant' ($v d , q o t y r i B]$), the only place in the Old Testament that this particular phrase occurs. Van der Kooij (1993:497-498) notes four common interpretations of this phrase: (a) The most well-known view is that it designates the community of faithful, law-abiding Jews. (b) R H Charles (referred to by van der Kooij 1993:498) believes that the phrase means 'the religion of Israel alike as a creed and its expression in worship.' (c) Hengel (quoted by van der Kooij 1993:498) thinks that the phrase 'must be equated with the Mosaic law.' (d) Lastly, Lebram (quoted by van der Kooij 1993:498) believes that in the light of Sirach 45:15, 24 and 1 Maccabees 2:54 the phrase refers to the 'covenant of priesthood'.

Van der Kooij (1993:498-500) continues to outline the reasons for his preference of Lebram's view. He takes the phrase $v d , q o t y r i B]$ to mean 'the ordinance concerning the sanctuary, both with respect to its rituals (sacrifices) and its holy objects' (van der Kooij 1993:500). Therefore, the phrase 'those who forsake the holy covenant' in verse 30 refers to 'persons who no longer do what they should do in the temple' (ibid), while the expression $t y r i B] d y g I n \bar{O}$ in verse 22 is in his opinion the head of the temple and its cult.

While van der Kooij's arguments are interesting, I think his view is too narrowly fixed on the situation in the days of Antiochus IV. But even granted that, the persecution at that time was not

just restricted to the priests and the temple, and therefore I believe that the statements in verses 28-32 have a wider application. If, however, as I think is warranted (c f Baldwin 1978:199-201), one allows for secondary references of this prophecy to later times or rulers, and this prophecy is not just about the time of Antiochus IV, but points generally to human oppressors whose character will become worse as history continues, then the term $\nu\delta, \rho\omicron \text{ tyriB}$] will refer to those people who remain true to God. But, since we are dealing in these chapters with texts of a highly symbolic nature, that may also be too narrow a view, and there may be several possible interpretations.

On the one hand, it seems that $\nu\delta, \rho\omicron \text{ tyriB}$] is actually referring to people. If that is so, the usage is similar to that in Isaiah 42:6 and 49:8, where the phrase $\mu[; \text{ tyriB}$ is used (a connection also implied by Montgomery 1927:451, commenting on Daniel 11:22). In an article on the term tyriB] in the prophetic books I remarked that a person becomes a tyriB] by what he *does* (Lington 2002b). In the contexts of Isaiah 42 and 49 it is of course relatively easy to determine what is done by the Servant to warrant the designation $\mu[; \text{ tyriB}$]. What about Daniel 11? There is no direct reference to what the people do, if indeed $\nu\delta, \rho\omicron \text{ tyriB}$] refers to people, though one might surmise that verses 33 -35 refer to them. If this is so, these people are those who 'understand' and who 'instruct many'. The word 'holiness' is then also an important marker, since it means 'apartness, sacredness' (BDB, p. 871), in other words, the people belonging to the $\nu\delta, \rho\omicron \text{ tyriB}$] have set themselves apart for the service of God alone. That is why they suffer persecution from the 'king of the north'.

But perhaps there is even more to it than that. I think Baldwin (1978:193) makes a very significant observation when she notes that 'by using this phraseology "holy covenant" more than [mere animosity against the Jews] is implied, for it took two to make a covenant and God's initiation of it made any opponent anti-God.... In the new situation the enemy will be taking on God himself.' In other words, the 'holy covenant' refers not just to the people who have set themselves apart, but also to God, to whom they have consecrated themselves.

On the other hand, the word tyriB] in verses 28 and 30, I think, has definite connotations with the Sinai covenant, to which verse 31, speaking of the desecration of the sanctuary and the abolition of sacrifices, is evidence. The question then is why the writer used the word 'holy' to qualify it. Perhaps it is simply to differentiate it from all the other, secular covenants that are alluded to in the chapter. This would also explain the expression 'prince of the covenant' (v 22) because, whoever is meant, it is a human being with whom the covenant is concluded, while the $\nu\delta, \rho\omicron \text{ tyriB}$] refers to the covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel. The same applies to Daniel 9:27, where there is also a covenant (or agreement) between humans (whoever they are) in view. This interpretation of the phrase would also allow for secondary references after the actual time of Antiochus IV.

However, the use in verse 32 without the epithet 'holy' still needs to be accounted for. I do not have an entirely satisfactory explanation for it, but perhaps the second part of the verse which refers explicitly to the people 'who know their God' was considered enough to ensure that the readers would get the correct idea which covenant was meant.

5. Conclusion

The term $\text{tyr}iB$] can have a variety of shades of meaning in the different contexts in which it is used. When it refers to human parties alone, the word is best translated ‘treaty’, ‘agreement’, ‘compact’, ‘pact’ or the like. What is usually implied in such contexts is a set of obligations or duties that one or both parties to the treaty have to fulfill, in accordance with the terms of the treaty concerned. The treaties, like most Ancient Near Eastern treaties, may take one of two forms, either a royal grant (e.g. the friendship pact between Jonathan and David) or suzerain-vassal (e.g. the treaty between Israel and the Gibeonites). Such treaties were probably confirmed by oath, but the word ‘to swear’ ($[b\bar{v}]$) is only mentioned explicitly once in the context of covenants between humans, in Joshua 9:15. Oaths are however implied in the instances where David and Israel made a covenant, and he became their king (2 Sm 5:3), and between Jonathan and David (1 Sm 20:8-16). In all but two cases, the verb used to conclude the $\text{tyr}iB$] is $\text{tr}k$, the exception being the treaty between Asa and Ben Hadad, where Asa simply says $\bar{d}n<ybeW ynIyBe \text{tyr}iB$].

Where one of the parties of the $\text{tyr}iB$] is Yahweh, the implication from the start is that the superior party, Yahweh, will set the conditions of the covenant offered. In most instances in the books under consideration, the word $\text{tyr}iB$] is used in a way that implies that an already existing covenant, usually the Sinai covenant, occasionally the Davidic or Abrahamic, is referred to. In some instances definite rules and regulations are set out which need to be obeyed (usually the command not to worship other gods). Other rules and regulations that may also be included in the covenant are supposed to be common knowledge.

The Davidic covenant, the only covenant not previously mentioned in the Pentateuch, is introduced not as a completely new entity, but as flowing from the old tradition, that culminates in Yahweh’s promises to the royal line. The Davidic king, though given the promise that Yahweh will give him an ‘everlasting’ dynasty, will have to demonstrate his co-operation by ‘doing right’ (the opposite of ‘doing wrong’ in 2 Sm 7:14), or else face Yahweh’s chastisement. It is not stated what this involved, but it is here that the connection to previous covenants, where stipulations, regulations and covenant curses were given, is obvious.

The designation of the Davidic covenant as ‘forever’ is significant. It relates to and fits in with other covenants that were considered ‘forever’: the covenants with Noah (Gn 9), Abraham (Gn 17), the Sabbath obligation (Ex 34), the covenant with Phinehas (Nu 25) and the new covenant (Jr 32). From this list of covenants between Yahweh and Israel (or, indeed, the human race as a whole), it is obvious that they are *all* termed *forever*! But what is the significance of this? I think, it basically means that Yahweh will never, on his part, abandon the relationship with people which he has established. This does not mean that individuals who do not wish to stay in relationship with Yahweh will not face the consequences. On the contrary, in almost all of these covenants there are sanctions for disobedience on the part of the human party. But this will not affect

Yahweh's overall commitment to the people. There will always be some individuals who are wholeheartedly committed to him, and he will continue his dealings with them.

For the Chronicler, though he is not oblivious to the Sinai $\text{cyr}i\text{B}$, the Davidic covenant seems to be more central. He elaborates greatly on the establishment of the Davidic dynasty and the building of the temple. He also puts great stress on the fact that David instituted worship forms, that later kings ensured were reintroduced after times of apostasy (c f Hezekiah 2 Chr 29, Josiah 2 Chr 34). This preference for the Davidic covenant seems to lie in the fact that during the exile it began to be reinterpreted as extending to the whole people of God rather than just one family (c f Selman 1994:50), similar to Isaiah 55:3. Despite the exile, Israel is still God's people, as he is their God, and he is still committed to them. Therefore, there is a greater stress in this work on the unconditional aspects of the Davidic covenant. However, lest they forget why the punishment befell the nation, there is also due emphasis on the importance and continued relevance of the laws of Moses for the covenant community.

Covenant renewals are reported on six occasions: Joshua's at Shechem (Jos 24), Asa's renewal (2 Chr 15), the crowning of king Joash (2 Ki 11, 2 Chr 23), Hezekiah's covenant (2 Chr 29), Josiah's purge (2 Ki 22-23, 2 Chr 34), and the dissolution of marriages with foreigners (Ezra 10). One might even add a seventh occasion, Nehemiah 9-10, where again the people separate themselves from foreigners. However, the word $\text{cyr}i\text{B}$ occurs in these chapters only in Nehemiah's prayer. It is obvious from this list that the post-exilic writers seem to put more emphasis on covenant renewals than the Deuteronomist historians. The latter point out that despite such efforts, the nation was eventually doomed to destruction because of their apostasy. The writers of Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah on the other hand seem to have taken the covenant renewals as an indication of the continuity of God's dealings with his people through the Davidic line.

In almost all of these instances of covenant renewal the verb crk is used to describe the conclusion (or rather, re-conclusion, if such a word exists) of the covenant (the exception being 2 Chr 15, where the word awb is used). In three cases there is reference to sacrifices in one way or another: either sacrifices are offered there and then, or the Passover is celebrated, which implies the offering of sacrifices. It is interesting that in the only instance where the word crk is not used for the conclusion of the covenant, sacrifices are mentioned.

The most important and significant feature of all the covenant renewals is that there is either an explicit reference or at least an allusion (Ezra 10) to the removal of idolatrous worship. Ezra 10 and Nehemiah 9-10 of course have to do with the removal of foreign wives. In my opinion this is also a move against idolatry, which gains significance if, as Albertz (1997:376) remarks, the personal religion of the family began to be increasingly important in exilic and post-exilic times. The prohibition of foreign marriages was necessary, since it would have almost certainly included an acceptance of other gods in the home, and worship of foreign gods in the home would have an adverse effect on the whole covenant community.

In the wisdom books, a variety of nuances of meaning can be detected for $\text{tyr}\bar{\text{i}}\text{B}$]. In Job, we find the word refers to a particular promise of protection (5:23) or to a vow Job has made himself (31:1). In the various Psalms, most occurrences of $\text{tyr}\bar{\text{i}}\text{B}$] are in the context of covenants between Yahweh and Israel. The word may refer to the Sinai covenant (e.g. 25:10, 44:10) or to the close relationship between Yahweh and the believer (e.g. 25:14). On the other hand, the people might have had a completely wrong idea of what it meant to be in covenant with God (50:5, 16). Once, there is reference to a covenant between people (55:20). The worshipper may complain to God that he has not kept his side of the covenant (74:20), while on other occasions the worshipper confesses his people's failure to do so (78:10, 37). On such occasions, words like 'have regard for' (74:10, rare), 'forget', 'refuse', 'did not keep' are common. Sometimes, $\text{tyr}\bar{\text{i}}\text{B}$] is coupled with $\text{d}\bar{\text{s}}$, j , and/or tma in its various forms. Indeed, it is interesting, that tma seems to be coupled with $\text{tyr}\bar{\text{i}}\text{B}$] almost exclusively in the Psalms and Nehemiah.

In Proverbs, $\text{tyr}\bar{\text{i}}\text{B}$] is used in connection with the marriage vows, similar to Malachi 2:14. Although not frequently mentioned, the use of the image of marriage for a covenant relationship had a profound influence on the prophecies of Hosea. It appears that from early on, marriage and covenant were closely linked.

In Daniel, $\text{tyr}\bar{\text{i}}\text{B}$] occurs in chapters 9 and 11 only, once in Daniel's prayer in the phrase 'he who keeps covenant and mercy', and elsewhere in connection with apocalyptic prophecies. On two occasions the word $\text{tyr}\bar{\text{i}}\text{B}$] clearly refers to a covenant or pact between human beings. Three times the enigmatic description 'holy covenant' is used. I suggested that perhaps the epithet 'holy' was used to differentiate a divine-human covenant from merely secular ones. If I am right, it may mean that the word had become rather watered down in secular usage, similar to Hitler's adage that 'treaties are there to be broken'. Hence the need for qualification for lack of a better term to describe the relationship between Yahweh and his people.

To conclude, there is, as far as I can see, no other term in Hebrew that expresses the idea of 'covenant', 'treaty', 'compact' or the like. Therefore, the word $\text{tyr}\bar{\text{i}}\text{B}$] is applied in a variety of different circumstances, including the relationship between Yahweh and his people. While the word may simply refer to one or all of the obligations that Yahweh put on people, or to the promise that he gave, I believe that $\text{tyr}\bar{\text{i}}\text{B}$] always implies a relationship between God and man. It is a term indicative of both relationship and commitment. Therefore, I think that in the contexts of divine-human relationships in the Old Testament, the word should be rendered 'covenant'.

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